THE GROWTH OF ENGLISH

THE
GROWTH OF ENGLISH

AN ELEMENTARY ACCOUNT OF THE PRESENT FORM OF OUR LANGUAGE, AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

BY HENRY CECIL WYLD

MERTON PROFESSOR OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

FIRST EDITION	*August* 1907
Reprinted	*April* 1911
Reprinted	*April* 1914
Reprinted	*March* 1921
Reprinted	*October* 1923
Reprinted	*July* 1925
Reprinted	*October* 1927

PREFACE

THIS book is obviously a book for beginners. It may serve for Secondary Schools, should some of these institutions find it convenient to include such a study of the native language as is here proposed in their curriculum; but the work is primarily intended for Training Colleges. Those who are preparing intending teachers for their profession will find that a very large part, at least, of the Board of Education Regulations for the study of the *English Language* is here covered.

My experience leads me to believe that it is hardly possible to state things too simply or too plainly in a work designed for beginners, and I think that the following short account of the elements of phonetics, and of English pronunciation in particular, will be found an intelligible and useful starting-point for those who approach these subjects for the first time. If beginners will take the trouble to master thoroughly Chapters I. to IV., they will find it easy to grasp a much more advanced treatment of the subject. My

own opinion is that this elementary phonetic training ought to begin at the age of ten or twelve, and I have tried to make the opening chapters suitable to children, as well as useful for students of the ordinary Training College age.

After much consideration, I resolved to try the experiment of using the ordinary English spelling throughout the book, instead of adopting an exact phonetic notation. The latter course would have been, in some respects, more convenient, but the essential point is to teach people to think clearly about speech sounds, and to use a terminology sufficiently exact to express those phonetic facts which are within their knowledge.

A few words are necessary as to the general scope and plan of the book. The fundamental point from which I start is that the beginner's attention must be directed to the *familiar facts of his own speech*, and that he must learn to observe these accurately. I have therefore selected in a systematic manner certain phenomena of English speech which come within every one's experience, and while directing attention to them, have used them to interpret and express some of the most fundamental facts in the life of language. When the beginner has learnt to observe dialectal variation all round him, when he has become aware that his own speech, and that of

his associates, is in process of transformation, he can understand that a language which has a *Future* must also have had a *Past*—he has seen and realized those forces actually at work which shape what we call the History of Language.

In dealing specifically with the History of English, I have tried to relate it in a vital way to the facts and phenomena of Present-day English, and, further, to indicate broad principles rather than merely isolated facts which are the partial expression of these principles.

It is my earnest hope that those chapters especially which deal with the varieties in modern English speech may not only prove interesting to students, but may suggest to their teachers further developments of what I can but believe are fertile and really educative lines of instruction. To many lecturers in Training Colleges the methods here suggested will doubtless be novel, but if they will give them an honest trial, they will find that to deal in this way with living and familiar realities will not only excite the interest of their pupils, but will also develop in these the faculties of observation and intelligence. I would venture to suggest to those Training College lecturers who use the book that the first seven chapters might form the basis of a First Year's Course, to be amplified and illustrated from the

own opinion is that this elementary phonetic training ought to begin at the age of ten or twelve, and I have tried to make the opening chapters suitable to children, as well as useful for students of the ordinary Training College age.

After much consideration, I resolved to try the experiment of using the ordinary English spelling throughout the book, instead of adopting an exact phonetic notation. The latter course would have been, in some respects, more convenient, but the essential point is to teach people to think clearly about speech sounds, and to use a terminology sufficiently exact to express those phonetic facts which are within their knowledge.

A few words are necessary as to the general scope and plan of the book. The fundamental point from which I start is that the beginner's attention must be directed to the *familiar facts of his own speech*, and that he must learn to observe these accurately. I have therefore selected in a systematic manner certain phenomena of English speech which come within every one's experience, and while directing attention to them, have used them to interpret and express some of the most fundamental facts in the life of language. When the beginner has learnt to observe dialectal variation all round him, when he has become aware that his own speech, and that of

his associates, is in process of transformation, he can understand that a language which has a *Future* must also have had a *Past*—he has seen and realized those forces actually at work which shape what we call the History of Language.

In dealing specifically with the History of English, I have tried to relate it in a vital way to the facts and phenomena of Present-day English, and, further, to indicate broad principles rather than merely isolated facts which are the partial expression of these principles.

It is my earnest hope that those chapters especially which deal with the varieties in modern English speech may not only prove interesting to students, but may suggest to their teachers further developments of what I can but believe are fertile and really educative lines of instruction. To many lecturers in Training Colleges the methods here suggested will doubtless be novel, but if they will give them an honest trial, they will find that to deal in this way with living and familiar realities will not only excite the interest of their pupils, but will also develop in these the faculties of observation and intelligence. I would venture to suggest to those Training College lecturers who use the book that the first seven chapters might form the basis of a First Year's Course, to be amplified and illustrated from th

experience of the teacher, with the co-operation of the pupil's own efforts. If properly treated, the ground here covered will form an excellent preparation to the elementary historical study contained in the remaining chapters, which might with propriety be left to the Second Year. If the historical part of the course be accompanied by the study of a portion of Chaucer, as suggested in my pamphlet, *The Place of the Mother Tongue in National Education*, the whole subject will be illuminated by actual experience, at first hand, of an earlier form of English.

HENRY CECIL WYLD.

THE UNIVERSITY,
LIVERPOOL,
June, 1907.

NOTE ON SECOND EDITION

IN the present edition, it is hoped that most of the misprints have been corrected. I may call attention in particular to the explanation of *jaw* and *jowl*, p. 142, which was wrongly given in the former edition. One or two suggestions made by critics have been adopted. At the suggestion of various readers an index has been added.

H. C. W.

CONTENTS

THE GROWTH OF ENGLISH

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS LANGUAGE?

THE word 'language' is used in English in several senses. We speak of *Sign Language* or *Gesture Language*, meaning those movements of the fingers, the hands, or the head, which are used by some savages, or by the deaf and dumb, to convey to others their thoughts and wishes. But by language we generally mean those sounds which we make in speaking. If we call this kind of language Speech there is no doubt as to what we mean. This is the kind of language with which we are now going to deal. We all of us use it constantly, and could not carry on our lives without it. It is by means of language or speech that we let other people know what we are thinking, what we want, what we like and dislike. Some unfortunate persons are unable to speak. We speak of these people as being 'deaf and dumb.' This usually means that they are *deaf*, quite deaf, either from their birth or from a very early age. It is because they are unable to hear that these people are dumb, or unable to speak; for we learn to

speak, as very small children, by hearing others do so, and imitating them.

Now, to all ordinary people language, or the power of speech, is such a natural thing, and so familiar, that they do not think very much about it. If they were asked, 'What is language?' most people would not be able to give a very clear answer.

And yet language, although it is so common, is a very wonderful and precious thing, one which is well worth thinking about. We therefore surely ought to be able to say exactly what language is, seeing how familiar it is to all of us, and what an important and necessary thing it is in our lives. Let us try and understand exactly what language is.

We have said that we can express our thought by gestures or signs. Most people use some gestures while they are speaking, but in many cases it would be hard to say what exactly is the meaning of these gestures. But in England, at any rate, everybody understands, even if nothing is *said*, that when a man nods his head he means 'yes' and that when he shakes it from side to side he means 'no.' In fact, these two gestures are just as full of meaning as the two words just mentioned. We see, then, that gestures of this kind serve the same purpose as ordinary language or speech—that is, they express our meaning. In fact, deaf people and many savage races can carry on long 'conversations'—that is, can ask questions and answer them, can *express their meaning*—by means of signs and gestures alone, and without any spoken words.

Language, then, whether it consist of gestures or of what we call 'speech,' is a means for letting others

know what is in our minds, what we are thinking of, or feeling, or what we desire.

We want just now to consider more especially what that way of expressing our thoughts is that we call 'speech,' or 'language,' in the usual sense of the word. Now, speech is *heard*, and therefore consists of *sounds*. When we speak we make certain sounds which for ourselves and our friends have a meaning.

How are these sounds produced? If we watch a person who is speaking, or look at ourselves in the looking-glass while we are speaking, we can see that the lips move to a certain extent, and also that the mouth is sometimes more or less open, sometimes almost or entirely closed. We cannot see, however, what is going on inside the mouth, still less what is going on lower down in the throat.

As a matter of fact, three very important actions besides the movements of the lips and jaws are carried out in the act of speech. First, in the mouth, the *Tongue* is moving rapidly from one position to another; secondly, in the throat, two small membranes called the *Vocal Chords* are alternately made tight, and are loosened; thirdly, the air which is breathed into the lungs is being expelled, passing through the throat and mouth.

The sounds which we make in speaking are due to these movements of the vocal organs. We can therefore define speech as the expression of thought or feeling by means of sounds produced by the vocal organs. It is well to add that these sounds are *deliberately and intentionally* uttered for this purpose, because there are other vocal sounds or cries which may be uttered *unintentionally*

under the influence of certain strong emotions such as joy, fear, anger, and so on. The emotional cries are mechanical and instinctive, and are not included under the term 'language.' Now, from what has been said, we see that there are two sides to language: what we may call the inner side, which is the meaning which we wish to express, and the external side, which consists of the *speech sounds* whereby we express that meaning.

We cannot tell what is passing in the mind of another by looking directly into that mind, nor can others know what is in our own minds, except by means of some *symbol*, whether a picture, a statue, a gesture or a sign, or, as in the case of spoken language, by means of certain sounds, which are the outward *symbols* of what is inward, and of the mind. A symbol stands for something else, and those who are familiar with the symbol and the particular way of using it recognize and understand it. Some symbols, such as pictures or statues, have a meaning for everybody: there is no need to make a special study of them before we can understand them. Thus, a picture of a horse or a tree will at once convey to anyone who has ever seen these objects the idea of 'horse' or 'tree.' But those symbols which are the sounds made by the organs of speech do not possess the same general significance. Therefore, until we have learnt a language, and have found out the meanings which the speakers attach to each particular sound, or collection of sounds—that is, words—we do not understand it; it conveys no meaning to us. For there is no absolute reason why the group of sounds which go to make up such

a word as 'horse' should necessarily convey the idea of a particular species of four-footed animal. Every Englishman at the present day, however, attaches practically the same meaning to the word; whenever he hears it he takes it for granted that the speaker refers to the same thing as that with which the sounds are associated in his own mind, and he knows that when he uses the word it will call up in the minds of his hearers the same picture which exists in his own.

To learn a language, therefore, means to learn a particular set of sounds, and groups of sounds, and to learn also what are the ideas, thoughts, and feelings for which they stand, of which they are the symbols, in the minds of the native speakers of the language.

We learn our own language very gradually, by hearing our parents, nurses, and teachers, repeat a word a great many times, and seeing them point to the thing or person for which the word stands. In this way we learn first the names of the most familiar concrete objects, and much later we gradually form some conception of abstract ideas, and learn their names. *Mother*, *Father*, *Dog*, *Tree*, *Grass*, *Flower*, and so on, are easily understood by the child, but it takes him much longer before he grasps the meaning of *Hope*, *Truth*, *Evil*, and so on.

It is of the highest importance, if we wish to understand the real nature of language, to realize fully that words consist of *sounds*, which are *uttered* and *heard*, and not of *letters*, which are looked at.

Owing to the large part which books play in education, people have come to hold strange views

concerning language, and some actually think that the *letters*, which make up the written word on paper, are the real language, and that the sounds, which we can hear, are only of minor importance. It is probable that we should find it easier to grasp the real external facts of language, which are its sounds, if we knew nothing about writing and spelling at all, and could only think of language as being uttered sounds. A little consideration of the question shows us that the letters are very unimportant compared with the sounds, and that when we study a language, it is the sounds and their meanings which must mainly concern us.

Let us think for a moment of the relation of the written word to actual speech.

Language, of course, existed and was handed on for ages before writing was invented, and there are plenty of races at the present day who have fully developed languages in which they can express everything that is in their mind, but who have no system of writing. Even in England and other highly civilized countries there are still old people who never learned in their youth either to read or to write. For such people as these it is clear that language only exists as something which is spoken. We see, then, that the life of language may be quite independent of writing and spelling.

What is writing? It is simply a clever and convenient device by which certain symbols, which we call *letters*, are used to represent the sounds of speech. Words are built up of a collection of several sounds, and so when we write we are supposed to use a letter for each sound of which the word is composed.

Letters in themselves are not language, but merely symbols which are used for the sounds of which language is composed. There is no life or meaning in written symbols by themselves; but they must be translated, as it were, into the sounds for which they stand before they become language or have any meaning. We become so accustomed to the look of letters, in groups to represent words, that we learn to read them off quite rapidly into the sounds for which they stand. Even when we read silently, without pronouncing the words aloud, we carry out the process mentally, and often unconsciously, of turning the letters into the sounds which each represents, and in this way we get at the meaning of what is written.

We have already said that the sounds of speech themselves are only the symbols of thoughts, not the thoughts themselves. Written words, however, are still further away from the thoughts and ideas than spoken ones, for they are only the symbols of these —that is to say, they are symbols of symbols.

Spoken language, then, comes first, and is the reality of speech; written words are a late invention, and have no life beyond that which the reader puts into them, when he pronounces the sounds for which they were written.

You sometimes hear it said that we ought to pronounce in such and such a way, because the word is so written. But this is putting the cart before the horse. It would be more correct to say that when words were first written, they were written in such and such a way, in the attempt to put down as accurately as possible, by means of the written

symbols, the sounds which occurred in living pronunciation. You may ask, 'What, then, does decide how a word is pronounced?'

It will be easier to explain this later on, when we have said something about what is called the history of language; but in the meantime it will perhaps be clear if we say that the pronunciation of a language changes slightly from age to age, and that, as a matter of fact, a word *is* pronounced in a certain way at a certain time by a given set of people. Why it is that the word is pronounced just in this particular way at a given time, must be explained later on, but we may be sure of this, that as a rule the spelling has absolutely nothing to do with the pronunciation. This is due to quite other causes. *We do not pronounce as we do because of the spelling.* We shall soon see that in English at any rate the spelling which we learn as correct appears to be but very slightly connected with our usual pronunciation of the words. Indeed, if we were to try to carry out the rule of pronouncing as we spell, we should produce a very strange language, which no one would understand.

We must banish from our minds any idea that pronunciation follows spelling; this is a very wrong and silly idea, and if we hold it, we shall have a very false impression of what language really is. Throughout this book, unless otherwise stated, when we speak of *Language*, or the *English Language*, we mean real, spoken language which can be heard, and not language written on paper, which is only a makeshift for the real thing.

We need think very little about spelling, but very

much about speech sounds, if we want to understand the many interesting things which there are to learn about language. When a word is referred to, you must think of the sound of the word, not of the look of the word when written.

You will perhaps find that you really know very little about the *sounds* of the words in your own pronunciation; but this is just what is important for you to think about. And you will probably find, also, that the less you think, or perhaps, even, the less you know, about the spelling of a word, the easier it will be for you to discover what sounds you really pronounce in it. Many people, who think only of the spelling, believe that they pronounce an '*l*' in the word '*colonel*,' or in the word '*alms*,' but you would find that a person who had not learnt English spelling carefully would never think of writing an '*l*' in these words if he came to write them for the first time, without ever having seen them spelt. A very important lesson, which most people have to learn, is to keep their ears open, and *listen* carefully to the language which they hear around them, and which they speak themselves.

In this chapter we have tried to make clear the following points: (1) Language, or speech, is a means of letting others know what we are thinking, or feeling; (2) language consists of sounds which for ourselves, and others, have a meaning; (3) the sounds of speech are made by the movements of certain organs in the throat and mouth, known as the organs of speech; (4) in speech, these sounds are deliberately and intentionally uttered, and are not mere cries; (5) these sounds are the outward symbols of what is

CHAPTER II

THE SOUNDS OF LANGUAGE

EVERY one will agree nowadays that if we wish to know something about birds and animals and flowers; if we want to realize the way in which they live and grow, we must learn these lessons by observing the living things—the birds and beasts, as they go about their business, of finding food, or making their nests; the plants as they unfold in wood or hedgerow. This personal observation will teach us much more of the essential facts, and in a more vital and interesting way, than we can gather merely from books and lectures.

In precisely the same way, the fundamental facts about our own language, those facts which we must know before we go on to more advanced and difficult studies in English, must be learnt by *personal observation* of our own speech.

Only, whereas in the case of Natural History it is necessary to cultivate the power of *seeing* accurately, when we come to study language, as it ought to be studied, we must cultivate our sense of hearing. We must, as we have already said, learn to *hear* with precision.

Now, many people, perhaps, will be surprised to be told that however much we may think that other

persons, with whom we constantly associate, speak exactly as we do ourselves, yet, as a matter of fact, no two persons, probably, speak absolutely and precisely alike. The differences may be so slight that it will take a great deal of careful observation to discover them, but they are there nevertheless.

This being the case, each person must begin his observation of the English which is spoken by noting how he speaks himself. When he has carefully observed the facts of his own speech, he can begin to compare this with the speech of others. I can do no more in a little book like this than show you how you should begin the study of your own English, and point out some of the things which you should notice in yourselves.

When a writer talks about English he generally means that precise form which he himself habitually speaks. He cannot possibly describe the way in which his readers speak, for he has not heard them. In many, probably in most, cases the reader's speech will be found to agree with that of the writer, but in some cases it will be different. But the readers may learn, from the way in which the writer describes his own pronunciation and so on, how they should observe and describe their own.

Therefore, if you find it stated in this book that such and such a sound is pronounced in two words which are given as illustrations, whereas you pronounce not the same but different sounds in the particular words given, this merely proves that your way of speaking is different in this particular respect from that of the writer, not that he is wrong in what he says about his own pronunciation.

It does not matter at all if you think that it is not a good way of speaking to pronounce the same sound in each of the words given. For it must be remembered that, for the moment, the writer is not trying to teach people how they *ought* to pronounce, but merely how some people, himself among them, actually *do* pronounce. You must also remember that we are now dealing, not with *letters*, but with *sounds*.

The study of the sounds of speech is called *Phonetics*, and although you are not invited, just at present, to make a deep study of this subject, there are yet a few points connected with the simplest facts of Phonetics which you ought to understand if you want to have an intelligent knowledge of English pronunciation.

Now, everybody, even those who, quite properly, make no claim to know anything about Phonetics, yet make use of the phonetic terms *Vowel* and *Consonant*. But how many people could give a clear definition of either term?

Some people would say that *a, e, i, o, u*, were vowels, and the other letters were consonants. But we have nothing to do just at present with *letters*: we want a definition of two classes of *sounds*. *a, e, i*, etc., are merely the *names* of certain symbols which we use to represent certain sounds. An equally bad answer is given by those who say that a consonant is a sound which *cannot be pronounced by itself*, and a vowel is one that can be so pronounced. This distinction is entirely false, for with a little practice each and every consonant which exists can be pronounced alone, and without a vowel following.

persons, with whom we constantly associate, speak exactly as we do ourselves, yet, as a matter of fact, no two persons, probably, speak absolutely and precisely alike. The differences may be so slight that it will take a great deal of careful observation to discover them, but they are there nevertheless.

This being the case, each person must begin his observation of the English which is spoken by noting how he speaks himself. When he has carefully observed the facts of his own speech, he can begin to compare this with the speech of others. I can do no more in a little book like this than show you how you should begin the study of your own English, and point out some of the things which you should notice in yourselves.

When a writer talks about English he generally means that precise form which he himself habitually speaks. He cannot possibly describe the way in which his readers speak, for he has not heard them. In many, probably in most, cases the reader's speech will be found to agree with that of the writer, but in some cases it will be different. But the readers may learn, from the way in which the writer describes his own pronunciation and so on, how they should observe and describe their own.

Therefore, if you find it stated in this book that such and such a sound is pronounced in two words which are given as illustrations, whereas you pronounce not the same but different sounds in the particular words given, this merely proves that your way of speaking is different in this particular respect from that of the writer, not that he is wrong in what he savs about his own pronunciation.

It does not matter at all if you think that it is not a good way of speaking to pronounce the same sound in each of the words given. For it must be remembered that, for the moment, the writer is not trying to teach people how they *ought* to pronounce, but merely how some people, himself among them, actually *do* pronounce. You must also remember that we are now dealing, not with *letters*, but with *sounds*.

The study of the sounds of speech is called *Phonetics*, and although you are not invited, just at present, to make a deep study of this subject, there are yet a few points connected with the simplest facts of Phonetics which you ought to understand if you want to have an intelligent knowledge of English pronunciation.

Now, everybody, even those who, quite properly, make no claim to know anything about Phonetics, yet make use of the phonetic terms *Vowel* and *Consonant*. But how many people could give a clear definition of either term?

Some people would say that *a, e, i, o, u,* were vowels, and the other letters were consonants. But we have nothing to do just at present with *letters*: we want a definition of two classes of *sounds*. *a, e, i,* etc., are merely the *names* of certain symbols which we use to represent certain sounds. An equally bad answer is given by those who say that a consonant is a sound which *cannot be pronounced by itself*, and a vowel is one that can be so pronounced. This distinction is entirely false, for with a little practice each and every consonant which exists can be pronounced alone, and without a vowel following.

The question is, What is the special character of that class of sounds which we call *consonants*, and how do they differ from the other class that we call *vowels?* The best way to decide the question is to pronounce a few consonants, and then a few vowel sounds, and observe what peculiarities the former class possess which are not shared by the latter.

As examples of consonants, let us take the *t* in *top*, the *p* in *pull*, the *f* in *fat*, and the *z* in *seize*. We can easily observe that in *t* and *p* there is a kind of checking of the breath for an instant, and that it then bursts out with a slight puff. If you can pronounce *t* and *p* (the sounds, not the names of the letters) by themselves, several times, you will soon notice the puff of breath to which I refer. You will find that *t* and *p* are over in an instant; you cannot audibly *continue* *t* or *p*, although you may repeat them as often as you like.

On the other hand, if you pronounce *f* or *z*, you find that you can continue them as long as your breath lasts. There is no sudden puff of breath, but the breath passes all the time, causing a slight *hiss* or *buzz*. This shows us that there are two kinds of consonants—one which is instantaneous, and which ends with a puff of breath; the other which can be audibly prolonged, which has no sudden puff, but which has a *hiss* or a *buzz* going on all the time.

The puff class are called *Stops*, because the breath is checked or *stopped* for an instant in pronouncing them; the hiss and buzz class are called *Continuants*, or *Open Consonants*, because they can be *continued* for a long time, and because the passage in the mouth,

through which the breath comes, is slightly open all the time. The *hiss* or *buzz* is caused by friction made by the air in coming through the narrow passage.

You must test the truth of these statements for yourselves, by pronouncing the consonants mentioned a good many times, and observing in each the points just described. When you have done this, try and find some other consonants of each class for yourselves.

We now come to *Vowels*. Pronounce the first vowel in '*father*' and in '*boot*' several times. You will observe that these sounds resemble the *open* or *buzz* consonants in this, that they can all be prolonged as long as your breath lasts. But you will notice also that these two vowels (in father and boot) *differ* from the sound of *z*, etc., in so far as the vowels have no hiss or buzz which is audible. The reason of this absence of friction is, that in vowels the passage through which the air comes is not sufficiently *narrow* or closed to produce it.

We can say, then, that the main difference between consonants and vowels is, that whereas in consonants the breath is either altogether stopped for an instant (in the *puff* class) or so far closed that a certain amount of friction is caused, in vowels the passage is *not* sufficiently closed to produce friction, and therefore there is no *hiss* or *buzz* at all. In fact, the distinction between vowels and consonants depends upon the degree of *narrowing* or closing of the passage through which the air or breath has to pass. A sound in which there is either audible friction, or a complete momentary stoppage of the air produced in

some part of the mouth, is a consonant; sounds in which there is neither stoppage nor friction are vowels.

Some Facts about Consonants.

It is very important to remember the distinction between these two classes of consonant—the *Stops* and the *Open* consonants. Besides those already mentioned, we have several others of both classes in English. Thus, *k* in *king*, *d* in *dog*, are *Stops; th* in *think*, *sh* in *ship*, are *Open* consonants. You should now try and find some more consonants of each kind for yourselves.

The Distinction of Voice and Breath.

If you pronounce first the *th* in *think*, and then that in *this* several times, you will notice that there is a difference between the sounds, although we write them both with the letters *th*. The sound in *this* is louder than the other; also, if you pronounce it as loud as you can, and make it last as long as you can, and put your finger-tips on your throat while doing so, you will feel quite distinctly a slight regular vibration going on in the throat.

This vibration, however, does not occur when you pronounce *th* in *think*. And yet you will find, if you attend carefully to the position of the tongue when pronouncing the loud and the other *th*-sound, that in both cases the point or tip of the tongue is placed against or between the upper and lower rows of teeth. In fact, the only difference between the two sounds as regards the way in which they are made lies in

the vibration in the throat in the case of *th* in *this*, which is absent in the other *th*.

This vibration is caused by what are called the *vocal chords*—two small membranes in the throat—being tightened and drawn across the inside of the throat. When the *vocal chords* are in this position, and the air coming from the lungs passes through the throat, the chords are set vibrating by the air. The air has, as it were, to burst through between the chords. All sounds pronounced with the chords drawn across the throat, so that they vibrate when the air passes through them, are called *Voiced* sounds. Beside *th* in *this*, we have in English several other *Voiced Open* consonants, such as *z* in *buzz*, *v* in *veal*. But the *vocal chords* may also be tightened, and may vibrate when *Stop* consonants are pronounced, as in *d* in *dog*, *b* in *big*, *g* in *goat*, and so on.

Try to find some other *Voiced* consonants, both *Stops* and *Open*.

You will notice that when you are speaking aloud *all* vowel sounds are accompanied by vibration of the vocal chords. This does not occur, however, when you *whisper* a vowel.

We now pass on to those consonants which are pronounced without this vibration. Pronounce *f* as in *fat*, *s* as in *sap*, and you will find that, although you can both feel and hear the air rushing out with a kind of hiss, there is no vibration in the throat. In these cases the vocal chords are *not* tightened and drawn across the throat; the air does not burst through between them, and they do not vibrate.

The following pairs of words have *initially* a *voiced* or a *voiceless open consonant*; the voiced sound is in

the first word of each pair: *zebra—sap*, *veal—feel*, *this—think*. As in the case of the two *th*-sounds, the only difference between *z* and *s*, *v* and *f*, respectively, is that the former is *voiced*, the latter is *voiceless*, or, as it is also called, a *breath* consonant.

We may give a few pairs of voiced and voiceless *stops*: *dog—top*, *big—pig*, *got—cot*. As regards the last pair, you will notice that, although *cot* is spelt with a *c*, it is pronounced with what we might call a '*k*-sound.' You must learn to recognize the same *sound* when you hear it, no matter how it may be *written*. Remember, once more, we are trying to learn something about *sounds*, not about *letters*.

Now try to find words which contain *voiceless* consonants, both *open* and *stops*, and then try to find out what each sound would be like if pronounced with *voice*—that is, with vibration in the throat.

If you clearly understand this account of *voice* and *breath* (or *voiceless*) consonants, you will have learnt a very important lesson. You see that it is much better to speak of *voiced* and *voiceless* sounds than of *hard* and *soft* sounds. The former terms have a clear and precise meaning, which is quite easy to grasp. Many people speak of *voiced* sounds as *soft*, and *voiceless* as *hard*; but if you ask them what the difference between the two kinds of sounds really is, they cannot tell you. Now, however, you know that the difference consists in the presence or absence of vibration in the *vocal chords*, and for the future you will speak of *voiced* and *voiceless* sounds.

Consonants formed in Various Parts of the Mouth.

You have, perhaps, never thought *how* or *where* you form any particular sound. And yet it is very easy to find out how a great many sounds, especially consonants, are made.

Besides the questions we have already discussed of *stops* and *open*, *voiced* and *voiceless* consonants, it is necessary to notice that these kinds of consonants may be formed in different ways and in different parts of the mouth.

I shall only mention a few points which it is very easy for each one to find out for himself with a little careful observation.

I begin with consonants formed with the *lips*, because you can *see* the *lips* moving, as well as *feel* their movements. Pronounce *b* in *big*, *p* in *pig*, and you can see, if you look in the glass, that each time you say either *b* or *p* the lips are closed for an instant. You can also *feel* that you are closing the lips; *p* and *b*, therefore, are suitably called *lip-stops*. If you add that *b* is a *voiced lip-stop*, and *p* a *voiceless lip-stop*, you have described all that takes place in forming these sounds.

Now pronounce *f* in *feel*, and *v* in *veal*. You can feel after a little thoughtful observation that when you pronounce *f* and *v* the lower lip is brought against the upper teeth, and that the air passes between the lip and the teeth. This fact can be discovered also by placing the finger to the lips while pronouncing the sounds, and by watching the movement in the glass; *f* and *v*, therefore, are called

lip-teeth open consonants, the former *voiceless*, the latter *voiced*.

The next easiest consonants to observe are those formed by the *point* or *tip* of the tongue. Pronounce *t* in *tip* and *d* in *dip*, and try to keep the tongue in the position necessary for pronouncing these sounds. Then put the tip of the little finger (the hand being held palm upwards) just inside the front teeth of the upper row. You will find that the *tip* of the tongue is *just behind the teeth*, touching the tops or roots of these. With a little practice you will be able to feel, from the sensations in the tongue itself, just where the tip is. We call *t* and *d*, therefore, *point-stop* consonants, the former *voiceless*, the latter *voiced*. The nearest *open* consonants are the '*th*-sounds' already mentioned, only in these sounds the *point* or *tip* of the tongue is more on the *teeth* themselves. Therefore we may call the '*th*-sounds' *point-teeth-open* consonants; you know already how to discover when they are *voiced* or not.

When you have thoroughly mastered what has been said about the *lips*, and the *point of the tongue*, and when you are able to be certain *from the sensation alone* that you are using the *point* or the *lips*, you may begin to experiment with regard to other sounds, and try to find out how they are formed—such as *s* in *sap*, or *k* in *king*.

Nasal Consonants.

We shall now consider for a moment one other point in connexion with consonant sounds, and that is the use of the nose, which plays a part in three

common English consonants, *n*, *m*, and *ng* (as in *sing*). There is a passage leading from the back of the throat into the back of the nose, and thence out through the nostrils. This passage is usually kept closed by means of a curtain or flap of flesh at the back of the mouth, that part which ends in the *uvula*. When this passage is open, however, part of the air passes through it at the same time that the other part comes through the mouth, and out at the lips.

Sounds uttered with the nose passage open, are called *nasal* or *nasalized* sounds.

You can easily discover for yourselves that *m* is merely *nasal b*, and *n nasal d*, but it might be more difficult to find out that the *ng* in *sing* is simply a nasalized form of the *g*-sound in *goat*. If when you have the tongue or lips in the necessary position for *d*, *g*, *b* (as in *dog*, *got*, *bit*), you open this passage leading from the throat into the nose, you will get respectively *n*, *ng*, *m*; if you close the passage you get the ordinary *d*-, *g*-, *b*-sounds. The reason why, when we have a bad cold in the head, we say, for instance, '*pid*' instead of '*pin*' is that our nose passage is (for the moment) always closed, and we are, therefore, unable to send any air through it, and therefore cannot pronounce a *nasal* sound.

Vowel Sounds.

Beginners generally find it very difficult to realize those positions of the tongue which produce the different vowel sounds, and it is better to postpone trying to do so until we are thoroughly familiar with the movements and positions of the organs of

speech which produce the consonants. We shall therefore merely note generally here that, as a matter of fact, the movements of the *tongue* are of prime importance in forming vowel sounds, but shall not attempt to describe them at this stage.

There is one point, however, which every one can observe without any trouble, and that is, that whatever may be the position of the tongue, some vowel sounds require the action of the lips, while others do not. If we pronounce the vowel in *see* or *set*, and then that in *root* or *rot*, and look in the glass while doing so, it will become evident that in the first two sounds the lips are perfectly passive and inactive, while in the two last they are brought slightly together.

Notice, when other persons are speaking, the movements of the lips in the utterance of vowel sounds, and make a list, both from them and from your own speech, of all the English vowels in which the lips are used, and of those in which they are not.

We call vowels like that in *root*, *rounded* vowels, those like that in *see*, *unrounded*.

The Nature of Diphthongs.

A diphthong is a combination of two distinct vowel sounds, only one of which has *stress* (p. 26), and which constitute only one syllable. In English some diphthongs are written with two vowel symbols, as *ou* in *house*; others are written with only one letter, as what is popularly called 'long *i*,' in *nine*. In English there are also sounds which are not diphthongs at all, like the vowel in *cause*, which are

spelt with two vowels. When we speak of a diphthong, therefore, we refer to such a combination of *sounds* as that described above, and do not consider *the spelling*, which is purely accidental. For an account of the English diphthongs, see pp. 33-36 below.

Hints on the Observation of Sounds.

When you want to study a sound, the best way is to pronounce first a word in which it occurs, and then detach it from the word and pronounce it by itself. Practise this *isolating* of sounds—many people find it very difficult at first. Remember that you want to get at a sound, and not at the *name of a letter*. Therefore, if you wish to observe the movements of the tongue, let us say in the sound of *n* in '*name*,' *do not pronounce the name of the letter n*, which we call 'en,' because that contains also a vowel (*e* as in '*men*'), but be careful to pronounce only the consonant *n by itself*. There is no difficulty in prolonging the sound of a *nasal consonant*, of an *open consonant*, or of *any vowel*, but a stop consonant has, of course, only a momentary sound, and is not heard, as a matter of fact, until the position of the vocal organs has been abandoned.

It will therefore be found a useful practice to, as it were, '*pronounce mentally*' in the case of stops, letting the organs fall into the right position, which they do instinctively, and then maintaining the position, and trying to concentrate our minds upon the position, without thinking of the sound. This *mental pronunciation* is of the greatest value in studying

every kind of sound. The best process is—first *pronounce the sound aloud*, then *whisper* it, and finally *pronounce mentally*, concentrating our mind more and more on the position pure and simple. It will be found easiest to begin with *open* consonants, because, as has already been pointed out, the sound of these can be prolonged.

Sounds in Combination.

Hitherto we have thought only of single sounds—*d*, *b*, *th*, and so on—but it must be remembered that sounds do not occur in ordinary language in this way. Speech does not consist of isolated, single sounds, but of groups or series of sounds, which form syllables, words, sentences.

In any given language there are only a certain number of sounds, and they occur only in certain combinations and in certain positions. Now, it is a curious thing that a new combination of sounds which in themselves are perfectly familiar is often as difficult to pronounce as an entirely new sound. For instance, we are all familiar with the sound *ng* (as in *sing*) after a vowel at the end or in the middle of a word. In the latter position we also quite commonly pronounce it before another vowel, as in *singing*. But if we try to pronounce the sound which we express by *ng* immediately before a vowel initially—that is, with no other sound before the *ng*—we shall, perhaps, find it almost impossible to do so without a good deal of practice. And yet there is nothing new in the combination, except the position of the sound in question, with respect to other sounds. Again, we can all pronounce *t* followed

by *s* at the end of a word, as in *bits;* but try and pronounce the combination *ts* initially, as in the German *Zeit* ('time'), and difficulty at once arises for some English people. It is a good preparation for the pronunciation of foreign languages to practise familiar sounds in unfamiliar combinations.

Sound Sequences in Ordinary Speech.

It is popularly believed that in speaking we separate our words one from the other by a slight pause after each. This, however, is not the case in natural, rapid speech. The pauses which we make in speaking are not due to the existence of any necessity for shutting off each word as an independent entity by itself, but to quite other causes, of which the commonest is that the supply of air from the lungs, by means of which we are able to speak at all, becomes exhausted, and we pause to take breath. Again, we may pause because we are at a loss for a word, or because we wish to be particularly emphatic.

All the sounds produced with one lungful of air, no matter whether they form one long word or several shorter ones, are known as a *breath-group.*

It is the mind which resolves the breath-group into words, not the voice. Unless we know a language, we cannot possibly tell by merely listening to it where one word leaves off and another begins. This is proved by the fact that children and foreigners often get hold of a wrong form of a word which they have only heard in a sentence surrounded by other words.

Supposing we did not know the word *but* in the sense of *only*, we should probably understand the sentence 'It is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous' to contain the familiar word *butter*. It is easy to find numbers of two-syllabled words in English which are indistinguishable in sound from other groups of syllables containing two words. For instance, *honour*, *on her*, *on a*; *offend her*, a *fender*; *not 'at home* (quickly pronounced), *not a tome*; *not 'at all*, *man! not a tall man*, and so on.

So much is it the case that words are not separated up in natural speech that the end of one word sometimes gets permanently tacked on to the beginning of the next, and the original form is altogether lost. Thus, in English *a newt* was originally *an ewt*. Sometimes a word loses its initial sound by being wrongly separated out from among the words in a breath-group. Thus, our word *umpire* has lost its original n, which it had in the French word *nonpair*. Here, *a numpire* being quite indistinguishable in pronunciation from *an umpire*, the word, when used apart from the article, was taken to be that form which we use.

Stress.—This is the name given to what is more popularly known as *Emphasis*, or simply as *Accent*. By stress is meant the degree of force, and therefore of loudness, with which a sound is uttered. In such a word as *pity* the first syllable has the strong stress, the second being much weaker, and, by contrast, called *un-stressed*. In *deceive* conditions are reversed, and the second syllable has the chief stress.

This alternating of strong and weak or weak and strong stress occurs in breath-groups as well as in separate words. Thus, in '*He came, he saw, he con-*

quered,' uttered as a sentence, we find the following order of stressing: weak, strong, weak strong, weak, strong, weak. '*He came, he saw*,' have each exactly the same order, the same system of stressing, as the word *deceive*. Stress is very important in language, not only because it serves to define meaning, but also because, as we shall see later on, a sound is often different according to whether it is strongly stressed or not.

Intonation.—This is the name given to the pitch or note on which a sound is uttered. Stress and intonation are both classed by students of language under the general heading 'Accent.' In ordinary popular English speech, however, Accent generally means Stress, because in English Stress is the most prominent kind of Accent. Other languages, such as French, replace, for the most part, differences of Stress by differences of Intonation, to express emphasis; while others, such as Swedish, make copious use of both forms of Accent. Intonation may be *falling* or *rising*. Falling intonation is heard in '*He was a good boy*,' where the last word is pronounced on a lower tone than the rest of the sentence to express the simple undisputed fact. Rising intonation is used in the question '*Are you coming home to-day?*' where the last syllable is *higher* than the rest. Rising intonation is usually necessary in English to express interrogation, unless some interrogatory word be used, such as *which* or *who*, where it is unnecessary, as in '*Who was there?*'

CHAPTER III

THE SOUNDS OF ENGLISH

THE first thing which must be observed in studying a language is its pronunciation. We therefore begin our survey of our own language by enumerating the sounds now in use in educated polite speech.

In the following list the ordinary symbols are used for each sound, and in order that there may be no mistake as to which sound is intended, several words are given to illustrate the sound under discussion. The letter, or letters, which in each case express the sound are in italics.

To prevent error I have tried to pick out only such words as will contain the desired sound, in the pronunciation of every speaker who uses the sound at all, unless, of course, his natural dialect is very different indeed from mine.

The Consonants.

k, as in *kick*, *c*ane, *c*art, *cr*ab. Note that this sound is spelt with *k* or *c* initially, but generally *ck* in the middle or end of words. Note also that *q* (or *qu*), as in *qu*ick, expresses merely the sound of *k* followed by *w*; and that *x*, as in fi*x*, is simply *k* + *s*.

g, as in *g*ive, *g*ate, *g*o, *g*rieve, bi*g*.

ng, as in si*ng*, bri*ng*, lo*ng*i*ng*, to*ng*ue. *Note* that, although this sound is written *ng*, it has not the sound of either, but is a different sound altogether. It is *one* sound and not two, and has already been described (p. 21). In fi*n*ger we pronounce *not only* ordinary *ng*, but also *g*, as in *g*ave, after it. Some people, in Lancashire, for instance, pronounce this combination—that is, *ng*, and then *g*, as in *g*ave—also in such words as lo*ng*ing.

t, as in *t*ake, *t*ry, *T*homas, bi*tt*er.

d, as in *d*og, *d*rake, *d*itch, hi*dd*en.

n, as in *n*ow, *n*eat, pi*n*, pe*nn*y.

th (voiceless), as in *th*ink, *th*atch, pa*th*, *th*row, wid*th*.

th (voiced), as in *th*is, *th*at, wi*th*er, wi*th*.

l, as in *l*ike, *l*ow, ca*ll*ing, hi*ll*.

r, as in *r*at, b*r*ead, be*rr*y.

s, as in *s*ing, *s*ake, hi*ss*, fa*c*e, *c*ity. Note that *c* is often written for this sound.

z, as in ha*z*e, bu*zz*, plea*s*e, de*s*ire. Note that this sound is often written s.

sh, as in *sh*ip, *sh*ape, *sh*rew, fi*sh*, na*ti*on, face*ti*ous. Note that, although often written with two letters, the sound in these words is a single consonant. It certainly has not the sound which either *s* or *h* usually have. Note also that the '*sh*'-sound is sometimes written *ti* or *ci*.

sh (voiced), as in plea*s*ure, a*z*ure, occa*s*ion. This sound is not uncommon in English, but we have *no* regular letter by which we express it consistently. It generally occurs in words which are written with *su* or *si*.

Note that what we call the '*ch*'-sound, as in *ch*urch, cat*ch*, atta*ch*, is simply *t*, followed by the *sh*-sound.

In the same way the sound of *dge* in bri*dge*, ba*dge*r, is simply a combination of *d* and the *voiced sh*-sound. This sound is often written with *j*, as in *judge*, *j*eer; or simply *g*, as in *g*in, *G*iles, *g*entle, and so on. The sounds in all those words are the same, namely, *d*, followed by *voiced sh*.

p, as in *pip*e, *pupp*y, *p*lay, to*p*.

b, as in *b*at, *b*right, *b*low, co*b*, stu*bb*le.

m, as in *m*an, la*mb*, thu*mb*, hy*mn*, ti*me*. Note that the simple sound *m* is sometimes pronounced in words where *mb* or *mn* are written.

w, as in *w*ell, thro*w*ing.

wh is merely *voiceless w*. Many English speakers make no difference between *wh*eel and *w*eal, *wh*ite and *w*ight, *wh*ich and *w*itch. Scotch and Irish speakers usually distinguish by pronouncing voiceless *w* in those words where *wh* is written. The student should determine what is his practice in this respect.

f, as in *f*at, tu*f*t, epita*ph*, rou*gh*, cou*gh*. Note the various ways in which this sound is written.

v, as in *v*oice, sa*v*e, do*v*e.

h, as in *h*at, *h*is, etc., is not, properly speaking, a consonant, but merely *breath* with *stress* or emphasis placed upon it. Note that the *Aspirate* (h) does not generally occur, in perfectly natural pronunciation, in word or syllables which have not fairly strong stress; thus, although written, it is not usually pronounced in *forehead*, except by affected or vulgar speakers.

General Note on English Consonants.—We

often write a *double* consonant, as in we*ll*, bu*tt*on, and so on, but in these cases only one single consonant is pronounced. Double consonants are, however, heard in English in such words as boo*k*-*c*ase, where what is known as a '*double k*'-sound is pronounced; also in such phrases as 'si*t* *t*ight.' Here the first word ends with *t*, and the second begins with *t*, but although we have two separate words, they are quite as closely joined together in pronunciation as the two elements of the compound boo*k*-*c*ase.

The letter *r* expresses no consonantal sound when it stands—(*a*) at the end of a word and breath-group or sentence; (*b*) at the end of a word in a sentence, when the next word begins with a consonant, as in 'fa*r* from it'; (*c*) in the middle of a word, before another consonant, as in hea*r*t, co*r*d, bi*r*d. In these cases, in Standard English, the *r*-sound is now quite lost, but the vowel, which was originally short, is now lengthened. Thus, there is no difference, in the pronunciation of most speakers of educated English, between *laud* and *lord*, *colonel* and *kernel*, *father* and *farther*, *alms* and *arms*.

The English Vowel Sounds.

Owing to the fact that the same letter is used in English spelling to express a variety of vowel sounds, it will be better, in order to emphasize this variety, not to group all the sounds expressed by each letter together, but to enumerate the actual sounds in a more or less logical order, quite independent of the spelling. The letters in italics are those which express the sound under discussion.

Simple Vowels* (as distinct from diphthongs):

1. The sound in *fa*ther, h*ear*t, mamm*a*.
2. " " b*u*t, come, among, blood.
3. " " f*u*ll, sh*ou*ld, book.
4. " " br*u*te, brood, who, fl*ew*, bl*ue*, J*ew*.
5. " " not, qu*a*lity, sw*a*n.
6. " " s*aw*, sw*or*d, dw*ar*f, c*au*se, ho*ar*d, soft, h*or*se, n*ough*t, salt, *a*ll, *aw*l.
7. " " butt*er*, Edinb*urgh*, togeth*er*.
8. " " b*ir*d, c*ur*d, h*ear*d, w*or*d, h*er*d.
9. " " h*i*t, s*i*lly, h*i*ss.
10. " " h*ea*t, s*ee*d, dec*ei*ve, bel*ie*f.
11. " " h*e*n, b*e*d, br*ea*d, br*e*d.
12. " " h*a*d, h*a*t, s*a*sh, sh*a*m.

Notes on the Simple Vowels.—(*a*) Nos. 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, only occur long; the rest are always short.

(*b*) Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, are *rounded* vowels—that is, pronounced by bringing the lips more or less together; the others are *un-rounded*.

(*c*) Notice that Nos. 3 and 4 are very much alike in sound; so are 5 and 6, and also 9 and 10. The difference between the vowels in each of these pairs consists not only in length—the first in each case being long, the second short—but also in other circumstances in the way of using the tongue, which produce a different quality of sound. Therefore No. 4 is not merely No. 3 pronounced long, but these are two distinct and different, though similar, vowel sounds.

* Nos. 1 to 6 are formed with the *back* part of the tongue, and are called *Back* vowels; Nos. 9 to 12 are formed with the *fore* part, or *front* of the tongue, and are called *Front* vowels.

(*d*) No. 7 is a very common sound in English. It is only used in *unstressed syllables*, and, of course, is always short. The ending *-er* always has this sound. It occurs also in the definite article '*the*' when it stands before a word beginning with a consonant; in the indefinite article '*a*' or '*an*', in the pronoun '*her*' when unstressed; and in many other short words which often occur, in sentences, without stress. The sound is sometimes called a 'vowel murmur,' and an 'obscure' vowel.

(*e*) Scotch speakers would not naturally pronounce the English sound of No. 8 at all, and in any case would pronounce the *r* and distinguish two quite separate vowels in *heard* and *word* respectively.

(*f*) Notice that *y*, when it expresses a *short* vowel, is written for the same sound as that expressed more commonly by short *i* in *him*. There is no difference in pronunciation between *him* and *hymn*.

The Diphthongs.

There are seven true diphthongal sounds in English ·wo which have the short *u*-sound (as in pull) as a econd element; three which have as a second lement the *i*-sound in bit; three whose second ement is the vowel murmur illustrated in No. 7 above.

I. The *u* Diphthongs.—1. *ou*, as in house, cow, ugh, count.

2. English so-called 'long *o*,' as in go, snow, dough, goat, wrote.

I. The *i* Diphthongs.—1. *oi*, as in voice, boy, boil, loy.

English so-called 'long *a*,' as in gate, pay, , rain, grate, great, pale, pail.

3. English so-called 'long *i*,' as in t*i*c, h*i*de, fl*y*, he*i*ght, fl*i*ght.

III. **The Murmur Diphthongs.**—These occur chiefly before an *r*, which is still retained in the spelling, but no longer pronounced, in Standard English.

1. *-eer*, etc., as in b*eer*, h*ear*, s*eer*, rev*ere*, t*ier* (id*ea*).
2. *-are*, etc., as in c*are*, a*ir*, th*ere*, pr*ayer*.
3. *-ure*, etc., as in p*ure*, obsc*ure*, M*uir*, sk*ewer*.
4. *-or*, etc., as in c*ore*, *oar*, f*or*.

Notes on the Diphthongs.

(*a*) The sound of *ou* (see I. 1 above) is composed of the sound *a* in f*a*ther, pronounced short, and followed by the sound of *u* in p*u*ll. Vulgar speakers sometimes pronounce this diphthong instead of No. I. 2.

(*b*) No. I. 2 consists, approximately, of the short *o* in hot, followed by the *u* of p*u*ll. The fact that we have no pure long *o*-sound in English, like the sound in French b*eau* or German schon, is a cause of great difficulty when Englishmen try to learn the pronunciation of foreign languages. Many people do not recognize at all that 'long *o*' is a diphthong, but a little observation will convince us that our vowel in go really is made up of two distinct vowel sounds. If the sound be recorded in a phonograph, and the instrument reversed, so that the sound is uttered backwards, the two elements are distinguishable at once to the most untrained listener. Northern English dialects in some cases, and Scotch speakers in nearly all, pronounce a pure ō without any diphthong.

(*c*) No. II. 1 consists, approximately, of the sound of *o* in *hot*, or that of *aw* in *saw*, followed by the *i*-sound in *bit*.

(*d*) No. II. 2 is not popularly recognized as a diphthong, so that English speakers are often surprised to hear that their 'long *a*' is not a pure single vowel like the French *é*. Three methods of ascertaining the diphthongal character of the sound may be suggested: careful observation of one's own and others' pronunciation of the sound; comparison with the French *é* sound; the phonograph test already mentioned in the case of '*long o*.' The diphthong is made up, approximately, of the *e*-sound in *men*, followed by the *i*-sound in *bit*. Northern English and Scotch speakers pronounce a pure vowel similar to that of French *é*. Vulgar English speakers, especially in large towns, tend to make the first element similar to the sound of *a* in *cat*, or even to that in the first syllable of *father*.

(*e*) No. II. 3 is a typical diphthongal sound. It consists of the *a* in *father*, followed by the *i* of *bit*. Except for the facts that this sound is called the 'long *i*' sound, is the name of a letter, and is commonly expressed by a single symbol, *i* or *y*, there would be no difficulty in at once recognizing it as a diphthong.

(*f*) The sound of the murmur diphthongs is most clearly heard from those speakers who do not pronounce the final *r* as a consonant No. III. 1 is pronounced by this class of speakers—that is, those who speak normal Standard English, as distinct from a Provincial variety—with the *i*-sound in *bit*, followed by the vowel murmur in *father*. Some Scotch speakers, who pronounce the *r* with a trill in such

a word as *beer*, appear to have no murmur vowel at all, and to pass directly from the sound of 'long *e*,' as in b*e*at, to the trill of the *r*.

(*g*) No. III. 2 is, approximately, the short *e*-sound, as in m*e*n, followed by the vowel murmur. Here again Scotch speakers trill or 'roll' the *r* in such words as *care*, and pronounce a different vowel altogether, one approximating to, or identical with, French *é*. In this case there is little or no vowel murmur between this sound and the *r*, and consequently no diphthong.

(*h*) No. III. 3 is simply the sound in p*u*ll, followed by the vowel murmur. Some speakers of Standard English do not use this sound at all, but substitute No. III. 4 for it in the words *pure*, etc. Others, again, pronounce the first element of III. 4 (see next paragraph), but omit the murmur. Yet another class pronounce the *u* of r*u*de, followed by the murmur. Whatever pronunciation is followed in the words in III. 3, note that the sound of consonantal *y*, as in *y*ear, immediately precedes the vowel sound.

(*i*) No. III. 4 is the vowel in s*aw*, followed by the vowel murmur. By most speakers of Standard English, probably, of the younger generation the murmur is omitted, so that little, if any, difference is made between c*aw* and *core*. Those speakers who pronounce the *r* in *core*, etc., pronounce no vowel murmur between it and the preceding vowel.

We have now completed the list of English sounds in one variety of Standard Spoken English. The first thing the student should do is to make a similar list of the sounds which exist in that particular variety

of English which he himself speaks, and also of words to illustrate each sound.

He should further establish the habit of knowing quite definitely what sounds he habitually and naturally uses in every word. He should learn to pull a word to pieces, as it were, and to resolve it into the phonetic elements of which it is built up. Then he can extend the process for whole breath-groups or sentences, being careful to note exactly, each sound, precisely *as it occurs in the breath-group*, not as if pronounced by itself or in a separate word.

Sounds in Breath-Groups.

When we begin to observe carefully our pronunciation of sounds in consecutive and rapid colloquial speech, we note at once that the same word is not always, under all circumstances, pronounced by us in the same way, but we utter sometimes one sound, sometimes another, in the same word.

There are two main points to which attention may be directed in this kind of study; they are: (1) the other sounds which occur before or after any given sound, and (2) the degree of stress or emphasis which a word naturally receives in any given sentence.

Influence of One Sound upon Another.

Contrast the sound of *k* (written *c*) in the words: *c*art, *c*ome, *c*all, *c*ool, with that in *c*at, *k*ill, *k*ent. You will notice, if you isolate the initial consonant of these words, that the *k*-sound in the former group is slightly different from that in the latter. In the second group of words the sound is formed rather further forward

in the mouth than in the first. The reason of this is that the vowels in the second group are all formed with the fore part of the tongue; those of the first with the back part.

Compare the plural of *cat, tip, rick,* with that of *dog, rod, cob.* It is evident that the final consonant—that is, the plural ending—of *cat,* etc., is the *s*-sound, while that of *dog,* etc., is a *z*-sound. This difference is due to the fact that *g, d, b,* are all *voiced* consonants, and voice the following *-s* to *-z*; while *t, p, k,* are themselves *voiceless* consonants, so that the voiceless sound of *s* can remain. The same kind of process is observable in past tenses of verbs. Those which end in voiced consonants take a *d*-sound to form the past tense, those which end in voiceless consonants take a *t*-sound. Thus, *bathed, cried, gazed, shaved,* are all pronounced with a final *-d,* but *laughed, passed, hissed, puffed, wished, liked,* are all pronounced (though not written) with a final *-t.* But changes brought about by two sounds coming into immediate contact are not confined to sounds occurring in the same word. They take place also through the influence of the initial sound of a word upon the final sound of the word which immediately precedes it in the sentence. Thus *the* is pronounced with the vowel *i*, as in h*i*t, before words beginning with a vowel, but with the vowel murmur before those which begin with a consonant.

In the phrase '*I'm glad I met you*' the *t* of *met* and the *y*-sound of *you* frequently combine in rapid, unstudied speech, into what is popularly called the *ch*-sound—that is, *t* followed by the *sh*-sound. Again. careless speakers often make '*in bed*' into '*im bed.*'

In this case the *b*, which, as we have seen, is a lip-consonant, makes *n* into a lip-nasal—that is, into *m*.

The question of whether *im bed* is an elegant pronunciation or the reverse is one which does not concern us for the moment—it is enough for our purpose that this pronunciation actually does sometimes occur in English.

A careful observation of our own natural pronunciation, and that of others, will reveal innumerable instances of sounds being changed by other sounds with which they come in contact. But for our observation to be of any use it is absolutely necessary that the pronunciation should be *natural* and not distorted.

The Influence of Stress on Sounds.

There is a considerable number of small but indispensable words in English which are often used, in sentences, with hardly any stress. When this is the case they come under the common tendency of our language to pronounce the vowels of unstressed syllables with the vowel murmur. A few examples will illustrate this principle. Compare the two pronunciations of each of the words in italics in the following sentences. The first of each pair shows the strong or stressed form of the word, the second the weak or unstressed form:

For { Who's this book *for?*
It's for me.

To { Whom (or, more familiarly, who) did you speak *to?*
I spoke *to* lots of people—*to* every one I knew.

Was { You said he wouldn't be there, but he *was*, after all.
Yes; I *was* told afterwards that he'd come if he could.

Shall { John won't be able to come, but I *shall*.
What time *shall* you arrive? I *shall* arrive at six o'clock.

Of { I can't make out what this dress is made *of*.
Oh, it's made *of* silk.

At { What are you driving *at*?
I think you and I are *at* cross-purposes.

The student should try to discover as many of these words as he can in his own pronunciation.

CHAPTER IV

VARIOUS FORMS OF ENGLISH—
1. PRONUNCIATION

In the preceding chapter we may be supposed to have considered one form of English, more especially as regards the pronunciation, with some care. We assume that such an examination as that which we undertook applies primarily to our own pronunciation. The reader will naturally have tested every statement which has been made, in the first instance, by the measure of his own speech, which he will in this way have passed completely in review. In some cases, probably, the account given of English sounds, and the words given to illustrate their uses, will have differed more or less from this or that reader's own pronunciation. Still, the chief exercise *of observation so far has been made upon the reader's* own habits of speech.

In the present chapter we are going to try to direct our observation upon the speech of others, and to contrast it with our own.

If we pay attention to the manner of speech of the various people of all sorts, outside our own family and friends, with whom we come in contact, perhaps even in a single day, we shall almost certainly notice that, in some respects at least, their English is more or

less different from ours. It may differ in pronunciation, in the words used, in its grammatical structure. Those persons whose language resembles our own most closely we shall find are our parents, our brothers and sisters, or other members of our family and household, and the companions of our own age with whom we have associated most closely all our lives. If we have a circle of friends whom we see constantly, in work or in play, especially if their parents and our own form a pretty close and intimate society, it will probably appear, in most cases, that we all speak almost exactly alike, apart from certain small differences which are due to personal tricks or peculiarities or affectations. All the members of such a circle as we are supposing will pronounce the same words in the same way; they will make use of the same expressions, the same words; none will have any glaring peculiarities in his way of speaking English, which will arouse surprise or laughter in the others. Now, these people and ourselves form what is known as a *community*, or group of persons whose social intercourse is frequent and close.

It is from these intimate associates of our childhood that we learn to speak—first of all from our mothers and fathers, our brothers and sisters and nurses, and then from their friends and neighbours and the children of the latter. But if we learn something from others, they also learn something from us. There is a mutual give and take, in the building up of speech, among all those who are brought into constant contact with each other. Each learns from all; all learn from each.

It is therefore a natural and inevitable circum-

horses, on gardening, on the growth of fruit and vegetables, on rural sports and pastimes. In towns, most of these things are more or less remote, and touch the greater part of the population not at all. They are known chiefly from reports in the newspapers or from books. Here people think of shops and offices, of tramways, of business connected with these, of museums and theatres and concerts. This means that a child brought up in the country will of necessity have different interests, occupations, ideas, and amusements, from one who has lived all his life in a city. The vocabulary of the two is certain to be very different, since the things which each naturally thinks and speaks about are so different.

Differences of Class.

What we now call class was originally largely a question of occupation, but at the present day the two by no means correspond in all cases. If similarity of language exists among those who associate together, as is indeed the case, then we can understand that people who belong to the same social standing will agree in their manner of speech more closely than people of different positions in the world. The country gentry, the clergy, the professional classes, the commercial classes, military men, shopkeepers, farmers, labourers, artisans, costers, tramps, form so many groups of persons who associate more frequently together, on the whole, than they do with members of the other groups. The less men see of each other, the more different will the form of speech of each become.

Therefore, class, since it throws some people together, and separates them from others, is very important in producing similarity and differences in language.

Of course, no class at the present day is completely cut off from social intercourse with others, so that it cannot be said that each class has its own manner of speaking English, which differs from all the others. Just so far as different classes intermingle, there will be agreement in their speech; just so far as class is still a bar to social intercourse, distinctions in language of this kind will survive and increase.

If we take as an example of class differences three very distinct grades, and compare their manner of speaking English, we shall see that the separation of class from class is a very real thing, and that the difference in language which results is considerable. Take a successful London physician, a prosperous and fairly educated London shopkeeper, and a coster from the East End. These three men, owing to their occupations, their inclinations, and the general customs of English society, do not naturally come into close social relations with each other. In fact, they practically never meet, unless one should require the services of the other to look after his health or to supply his wants. They all speak a form of English; each understands the other quite well, and yet the pronunciation, the vocabulary, and the grammatical forms which each uses differs more or less considerably from that of the others. These differences are sufficiently great, especially those of pronunciation, to form what we call a difference of

Dialect, and we have here what may be properly described as so many *Class Dialects.*

Difference of Place of Abode.

If, as we have seen, it is possible for persons who live in the same city to be so far separated from each other, by the mere differences of class, as to speak different dialects, how much greater, as it would appear, must be the separation of people who live long distances apart, and who never come into contact with each other at all?

As we travel to different parts of England, from South to North, from the centre of the country to the extreme West, and so on, we cannot help being struck with the great differences between the speech, say, of Sussex and that of Yorkshire, between that of Oxfordshire and that of Cornwall.

The reason of these differences is that each of these provinces possessed, from very early times, a separate dialect of English, and since the geographical separation continues, of course, to exist, and therefore free intercourse between the inhabitants of the various districts mentioned is impossible, the dialectal differences continue also.

Varieties of speech of this kind, which are peculiar to particular districts or counties of England, may be called *Regional Dialects.* Such are the Somersetshire dialect, the Cheshire dialect, and so on.

Now, if, instead of confining our observation in each district to the agricultural or industrial populations, we were to consider also the speech of the clergy, the medical men, or the squires in each part

what Sense Standard English is Better than Other Forms.

io form of language is, *in itself*, better than any :r form. A dialect gains whatever place of eriority it enjoys solely from the estimation in .ch it is commonly held. It is natural that the guage of the Court should come to be regarded as *most elegant and refined type of English*, and t those who do not speak that dialect naturally, uld be at the pains of acquiring it. This is what happened, and is still happening, to the dialect ıch we call Standard English. Of course, since this m of English is used in the conversation of the ned, the brilliant, and the learned, it has become ıetter instrument for the expression of ideas than › other dialect now spoken. This is the result of good fortune which this particular dialect had

and this is the form of our language which foreigners wish to learn. If we can truthfully say of a man that he has a Scotch accent, or a Liverpool accent, or a Welsh accent, or a London accent, or a Gloucestershire accent, then he does not speak 'good English' with perfect purity.

Since this form of English is not now confined to any one province, but is spoken by people of corresponding education and cultivation all over the country, we say that it is no longer a *Regional Dialect*, but the dialect of a Class, using the word in a very wide sense.

The origin of good English, or, as it may also be called, *Standard English*, was probably the Court Dialect of the fifteenth century, and this, in its turn, was primarily the speech of the upper classes in London. It was not a pure dialect, inasmuch as it was a blending of the English of the Midlands and of the South. This mixed dialect gradually spread among all those who came into contact with the Court, and was adopted by custom as the best and most polite form of English. For more than 300 years this dialect, at first, no doubt, merely held to be the fashionable mode of speech, has gained in prestige, until, at the present day, it is spreading all over the country, and among all classes. It has largely influenced the local dialects, for the children hear a form of it from the teachers in their schools, servants hear it from their masters, tradesmen from their customers—every one hears it in the Parish Church.

In what Sense Standard English is Better than Other Forms.

No form of language is, *in itself*, better than any other form. A dialect gains whatever place of superiority it enjoys solely from the estimation in which it is commonly held. It is natural that the language of the Court should come to be regarded as the most elegant and refined type of English, and that those who do not speak that dialect naturally, should be at the pains of acquiring it. This is what has happened, and is still happening, to the dialect *which we call Standard English. Of course, since this* form of English is used in the conversation of the refined, the brilliant, and the learned, it has become a better instrument for the expression of ideas than any other dialect now spoken. This is the result of the good fortune which this particular dialect had to reach its position of pre-eminence over the others.

When we speak of Good English, or Standard English, or Pure English, as distinct from what is known as Provincial English, or Vulgar English, we must remember that there is nothing in the original nature of these other dialects which is in itself inferior, or reprehensible, or contemptible. In a word, the other dialects are in reality, and apart from fashion and custom, quite as good as Standard English, considered simply as forms of language; but they have not the same place in general estimation, they have not been so highly cultivated, and they have not the same wide currency. It is in some ways better to speak a pure regional dialect than to

attempt to speak Standard English, and to mix and overlay it with provincial pronunciations.

The Nature of the Differences to be observed among English Speakers.

We have so far only called attention, in a general way, to the fact that differences exist, and we have pointed out briefly the reason of these differences as consisting in Class or Regional Dialects. We have now to ask of what precise nature are these differences? The most obvious, and in many ways the most important, are varieties of pronunciation. If the pronunciation of another person differs from our own, it may do so in two ways. There may be (1) differences in the sounds themselves; and (2) differences in the use of the sounds. We may consider these points separately.

1. Differences in the Sounds Themselves.

By this is meant that in many cases, if the pronunciation of two speakers be compared, it is found that each pronounce certain sounds, generally vowels, but possibly consonants as well, which the other does not use at all in his own natural way of speaking English, and which he is, perhaps, unable at first to pronounce at all.

If we are merely comparing the pronunciation of people of the same class, education, and general surroundings with our own, it is possible we shall find no examples of such differences. But if we go further afield and take the speech of persons who speak a definite Regional Dialect, whereas we speak

Standard English; or supposing we ourselves habitually speak a Regional Dialect, if we compare this with the dialect of quite a different part of the country, then we shall find, in all probability, that there are certain vowel sounds in that dialect with which we are quite unfamiliar. We may pronounce in the same words sounds which are something like them, but they are not absolutely and exactly the same sounds. A few examples must suffice.

(*a*) Lancashire *r*. In such words as *bird*, *part*, *card*, etc., most speakers of Standard English pronounce no *r*-sound at all. In Lancashire a peculiar *r* is heard, formed by turning the point of the tongue upwards and backwards, immediately after, or perhaps while pronouncing the vowel which precedes it. This, to Southern ears, or at any rate to ears accustomed to Standard English, has a very harsh, ugly sound, which is difficult to imitate unless we have always been in the habit of using the sound.

(*b*) The Oxfordshire and Berkshire sound in '*write*,' '*Minety*,' '*eye*.' This diphthong is quite different from that in use in Standard English, and to unaccustomed ears sounds almost like the sound in '*boy*,' etc. As a matter of fact, it would seem to consist of the vowel murmur (as in fath*er*), followed by the *i* in *hit*. It is very nearly, if not quite, the same sound as that heard, in the same positions, in the Irish brogue.

(*c*) Oxfordshire and Berkshire sound in '*boot*,' '*true*,' '*who*,' '*brute*,' etc. It is impossible to describe this sound in popular language in such a way as to convey an idea of its character. Very nearly the same sound is heard among vulgar

speakers in London. It is very unlike the pure '*oo*'-sound (better called the 'ū'-sound) of Good English, and is not very different from the French sound in *tout*, *cou*, etc. A very similar sound, though not quite identical, occurs in Devonshire.

(*d*) Standard English vowel in c*a*t, sh*a*ll, f*a*n, etc. This vowel, which is so common in the speech of all who speak Standard English in the South of England, and which is very characteristic of the Standard dialect, is unknown in the North Midlands, the North of England, and in Scotland. Even educated speakers, who otherwise speak the Standard dialect, often find the greatest difficulty in pronouncing this sound at all, and substitute for it a sound which is nearly identical with the first vowel in f*a*ther, only it is pronounced very short.

(*e*) Standard English *u* in p*u*ll, co*u*ld, g*oo*d, etc. This characteristic sound, which is the regular sound in the above words in the Standard Dialect, is unknown in Scotland and in the true Lancashire Dialect. In the former country, all but thoroughly Anglicized speakers invariably make no distinction between the words *pool* and *pull*. They pronounce in both cases the sound which in Standard English occurs in p*oo*l, only they pronounce it very short. The short variety of this sound is quite unknown in Standard English. Scotchmen have the greatest difficulty to acquire the sound in our p*u*ll. In Lancashire a sound is used which (to the ear) closely resembles the sound in Standard English b*u*t, and the sound in p*u*ll is extremely difficult for a Lancashire Dialect speaker.

2. Different Use of the Same Sounds.

It often happens that speakers whose speech is so far identical that none of them pronounces any sounds which are not also in general use among the others, yet differ among themselves as to which sounds they use in which words. There are several sounds in Standard English whose usage varies, some speakers uttering them in certain words, in which other speakers employ another sound. The sounds *aw* (as in *saw*) and *o* (as in *not*) interchange in the same words (though not in these two words) among different speakers.

The present writer habitually uses the vowel sound of *saw* in the following words: *alter*, *altar*, *falter*, *paltry*, *salt*, *fault*, *lost*, *cost*, *frost*, *broth*, *froth*, *cloth*, *soft*, *off*, *cough*; and the sound of *not* in *office*, *officer*, *coffee*, *hospital*, *costly*, *God*, *moth*. On the other hand, many speakers have the *aw* sound in all these words, while others have only the sound of *o*, as in *not*, in both groups; others, again, use both sounds, but distribute them differently among the two groups. Such differences of habit represent a mere fluctuation of usage within the Standard Dialect, and do not, in themselves, constitute a difference of dialect.

The word *ass* is pronounced by most speakers so as to rhyme with *pass* (that is, with *a*, as in *father*), but by others with the same vowel as in *gas*, *has*; *lass* has a similar fluctuation. Other speakers, again, pronounce the same vowel (that in *cat*) in all these words.

The words *clerk*, *Derby*, *serjeant*, *hearth*, are pronounced by good speakers with the *a*-sound of *park*, but by others with the sound in *lurk*, *birth*, etc. In

this case, Standard usage is now fixed in favour of the former pronunciation, and we must regard the other as either a provincialism or a vulgarism.

Much has been written of late years about the 'fashionable' habit of 'dropping the *g*' in present participles and verbal nouns.

The mode of pronunciation referred to is usually expressed by satirists by the spellings '*huntin'*,' '*shootin'*,' '*ridin'*,' '*mornin'*,' '*comin'*,' etc. The reader will note in passing that it is quite incorrect and meaningless to speak of 'dropping the *g*,' since this refers only to the spelling and not to the facts of pronunciation. What actually happens is that for the '*ng*'-sound (described above, p. 21) a different kind of nasal consonant is substituted.

As regards the habit itself, there is no doubt that it is rapidly gaining ground among an increasingly large class of speakers of Standard English. With some the pronunciations '*mornin'*,' '*huntin'*,' etc., are natural, with others they are assumed deliberately. In any case, it seems probable that we have here the result of a natural tendency of change in language. A very large number of the rural dialects show this tendency, and it may have been introduced into Standard English by speakers who had acquired the habit from them. Probably, fifty years hence, '*huntin'*,' etc., will be the most usual and received pronunciation among the best speakers.

Individual Peculiarities of Pronunciation.

Speakers of all dialects are liable to personal peculiarities of speech, which may arise from imperfect ear or power of imitation, from some defect in

articulation, or from mere carelessness. Among speakers of Standard English we may instance such tricks as the substitution of *f* for voiceless *th*, and of *v* for voiced *th*. Thus, we sometimes hear '*f*ink' for *th*ink, and '*v*is' for *th*is. Again, some persons find difficulty in articulating any kind of *r*-sound, and substitute that of *w* for it. Such purely individual variations rarely survive beyond childhood, but succumb to the derision or censure of others.

Vulgarisms and Provincialisms.

A *provincialism* is a pronunciation or an expression which definitely belongs to a provincial or regional dialect. Many peculiarities which we hear in the speech of persons who speak on the whole Standard English are of this origin. The reason of their occurrence is that the speaker has not completely freed himself from his native regional dialect. A *vulgarism* is a peculiarity which intrudes itself into Standard English, and is of such a nature as to be associated with the speech of vulgar or uneducated speakers. The origin of pure *vulgarisms* is usually that they are importations, not from a regional but from a class dialect—in this case from a dialect which is not that of a province, but of a low or uneducated social class. Thus, a *vulgarism* is usually a variety of Standard English, but a bad variety. An example of what is meant is the pronunciation of *tape* so that it is indistinguishable from the word *type*. Again, the so-called 'dropping of an *h*,' as when people say *'orse* for *horse*, is distinctly a *vulgarism*. In some cases a *provincialism* becomes a

vulgarism by being familiar to, and familiarly associated with, vulgar speakers. Thus, to introduce the Lancashire pronunciation of '*bush*' (so as almost to rhyme with *rush*) into a Standard English sentence would certainly produce the effect of vulgarity. It is very important, however, to bear in mind that pure provincial dialects in themselves are not vulgar. It is a profound error to imagine that dialect speech is an attempt to imitate Standard English; it is nothing of the kind, but is a separate and independent form of English. It is only when a speaker *is* attempting to speak Standard English, and lapses into provincial forms, that these are liable to sound vulgar.

Peculiarities due to Difference of Age.

The speech of a very old person is pretty certain to contain some features which are strange to that of a much younger speaker, even of the same class and standard of refinement.

The present writer has heard '*goold*' for *gold* and '*kyard*' for *card* from a very old man many years ago, and knows people still living whose grandmothers pronounced the first syllables of *quality* and *quantity* so as to rhyme respectively with *shall* and *plan*. Such pronunciations as *neighbor'ood, 'erb, 'umble, 'ospital,* may still be heard from old-fashioned speakers. None of these pronunciations were, or are, vulgarisms in those from whom they were heard: they were simply old-fashioned. If used by young people at the present day, they would appear so eccentric and unlike the best contemporary usage that they would almost seem vulgar. This shows

that the Standard of what is thought good or the reverse changes from age to age. This fact is very important to remember.

We have now made mention of the principal causes of such varieties as we may observe in the pronunciation of those with whom we come into contact. They are differences of Social Class, of Native Dialect, of Age, and those due to defective powers of hearing and reproducing sounds.

CHAPTER V

VARIOUS FORMS OF ENGLISH—
2. GRAMMAR, PHRASEOLOGY, AND VOCABULARY

THE diversity in the pronunciation of English, which we discussed in the last chapter, is paralleled by an almost equally variable Vocabulary, Grammar, and set of idiomatic expressions.

Grammar: the Standard Language.

The Grammar of Standard English is practically fixed and uniform, so that among educated speakers, no matter how much they may differ in other respects, Pronunciation, Vocabulary, and Idiom, they will generally agree in using the same grammatical forms.

In fact, divergences of Grammar of any great extent are usually assignable to Regional Dialects. There are, however, a few points of this order in which speakers of Standard English may disagree, in very colloquial speech, without it being necessary to attribute such difference of habit to separate Regional or Class Dialects. The differences we speak of are in reality due rather to the adherence on the part of some speakers to a more old-fashioned mode of speech. A few examples will suffice.

The use of the form *ain't*, especially in interrogative sentences, is at the present time discountenanced by many, although it is in frequent use among as many more whose education and breeding are unimpeachable. Instead of '*Ain't you coming with us?*' '*It's very hot to-day, ain't it?*' and so on, many people prefer '*aren't you*,' '*isn't it*,' or, in the latter case, some very precise persons who are afraid to speak naturally, lest they should fall into vulgarity, say '*is it not*.' We merely note the variety here, without in any way deciding in favour of one form or the other.

Again, '*em* for *them* is perhaps rather commoner than the latter in very colloquial speech. The former word, as we shall see later on, is *not* a contraction of *them*, but is quite distinct from it in origin; the apostrophe which it is the custom to write before the shorter word is due to the mistaken idea that the word *is* a contraction. The use of '*em* is another example of an old-fashioned form which by some is considered vulgar.

Grammatical Divergence among the Dialects Proper.

When we consider the speech of the Regional Dialects, the grammatical differences among these, or between them and Standard English, are very much greater.* Many grammatical usages that speakers of Standard English would consider terrible vulgarisms occur in these dialects, and are there perfectly '*right*' in the sense in which it is permissible to use this word when speaking of language—

namely, in that they are the regular and habitual forms of the dialects. What people who have not studied the history of our language would call the vagaries of the dialects, are in most cases every whit as justifiable from the point of view of the student of this subject as the grammatical usage of the most refined form of English. When a Scotsman says 'these comes,' he is not perpetrating an ignorant vulgarism, but is using an old form of the Plural of the Present Tense which is common to Northern Dialects of English. The Oxfordshire plurals *housen*, *primrosen*, are no more eccentric than the Standard form *children*, although by custom we do not use the weak form of the Plural in the above words.

The Oxfordshire and Berkshire use of *us* where in Standard English *we* would be used, and *vice versa* (as in '*us didn't know what would happen to we*,' etc.), is no more astonishing than the now 'correct' use of *you* as a Nominative Singular, which originally was a Dative Plural.

The Scotch '*I'll no can come*,' compared with Standard English '*I shall not be able to come*,' shows the use of '*can*' as an Infinitive; the Scotch and North English '*kye*' for the Plural of '*koo*,' 'cow,' is a survival of an old form which Standard English has lost. From the historical point of view, the received Plural, '*cows*,' is a 'mistake,' and is as much a departure from the old form as '*mouses*' instead of '*mice*' would be.

The reader can observe some of the above examples of regional dialectal grammar, and many others, according to the part of the country in which he lives. The warning may be uttered once more

that Regional dialects are *not* bad imitations of Standard English in their grammar any more than in their pronunciation. It is therefore altogether beside the mark to speak of their grammatical peculiarities, in points wherein they differ from the language of polite society, as 'mistakes' or 'vulgarisms.'

Differences in Vocabulary and Idiom.

Speakers of Standard English show great variety in these respects. In the choice of words and expressions a far greater latitude is permissible than in Pronunciation or Grammar. There is much in Idiom that is personal to the speaker, especially when conversation passes from quite trivial and familiar subjects into more thoughtful and serious lines. There are many words and phrases in use among the highly educated and the learned which are not really in common use at all among ordinary speakers, but which are derived from books. To the classes who use them these words and expressions may be quite familiar and habitual, but, for all that, they are not in common use among those who have nothing to do with books. Words and phrases of this kind, therefore, cannot be considered as part of ordinary, popular, colloquial speech, and must be regarded as belonging to the special dialect of the learned or literary classes.

Putting aside, therefore, 'book English,' which is entirely outside our subject for the moment, we must seek genuine differences in the vocabulary of living, popular speech, only in the language of everyday

life. If we find that people use different words and expressions for things and ideas which are familiar to every one, then we may say that we have genuine differences in the way of speech.

If we compare the differences of the kind we are considering in the Regional Dialects we find an almost infinite variety. We may therefore limit our remarks to differences which occur within the various forms of Standard English.

The Regional Dialects influence the Standard language in this respect, perhaps, more than in any other particular, and we generally find that the most educated and refined speakers, who live much in the country and who have much to do with the people of the district, introduce, unconsciously, into the colloquial speech many words and expressions from the local dialect.

Among the circumstances which produce variety in the vocabulary and idiom of Standard English we must therefore include the influence of Regional Dialects. We exclude the influence of literature for the reasons mentioned above, but we must remember that words of purely literary origin, got from books or newspapers, and not from ordinary conversation, in the first place, do, as a matter of fact, often find their way into popular speech, and become permanent elements even in Regional Dialects.

The other chief causes of difference are Class and Fashion, Occupation, Age, and even Sex.

1. Differences in Vocabulary, etc., due to Influence of Regional Dialects.

By way of illustrating this point, I propose to take two well-marked types of Regional Dialect—Scotch and Irish, meaning in the latter case English as spoken by the Irish peasantry.

To begin with Scotch, it is remarkable what differences exist between educated speakers in Scotland and those in this country in the commonest and most familiar expressions.

The following phrases illustrate this. The characteristic words are those in italics:

(1) *Scotch Expressions contrasted with English.*

English — I met him *in* the street.
Scotch — I met him *on* the street.

English — I always *have* eggs and bacon *for* breakfast.
Scotch — I always *get* eggs and bacon *to* breakfast.

English — Come *along* (speaking to a person); come *here* (speaking to an animal).
Scotch — Come *away* (speaking both to persons and animals).

English — The cat *wants to come* in.
Scotch — The *cat's wanting* in.

English — Will you *have some* more, or do you *want* any more? do you *want some* mutton?
Scotch — Do you *wish* any more? do you [illegible] *any* mutton? (quite impossible [illegible] land).

(2) *Irish Expressions contrasted with English.*

English He's *just fed* the pigs.
Irish He's *after feeding* the pigs.

English I'm going *into the next room* (meaning one leading out of another).
Irish I'm going *inside.*

English We *feed the pigs on* the small potatoes.
Irish We *feed the small potatoes to* the pigs.

English I wish we could stay in Dublin for the Horse Show, *don't* you?
Irish I wish we could stay in Dublin for the Horse Show, *wouldn't* you?

In Ireland the term '*stirabout*' is always used instead of Scotch and English '*porridge.*'

2. Differences due to Class, etc.

Words and expressions which one class or group of persons use habitually and without giving them a thought are held to be vulgar, or 'bad form,' by another group, and religiously eschewed by them.

Examples of phrases tabooed by the fashion of the moment among some classes, but commonly employed by others, are not far to seek.

The Use of 'Gentleman' and 'Lady.'—Such phrases as 'He's a very nice gentleman' or 'She's a very clever lady'—in fact, the use of these words with a preceding adjective—are felt by many to be contrary to the best usage; while to say 'Mr. Jones has had a bad fall from his horse, *poor gentleman,*' is to put oneself out of court at once. Even such a sentence as 'I met a good many *gentlemen of my*

acquaintance' would be avoided by a very large class of speakers, who would substitute for it, 'I met a good many *men* (whom) *I knew*.' In fact, the word 'gentlemen' in the majority of cases would not be used, 'men' being preferred to it, and 'lady,' though more frequently employed, is very constantly replaced by 'woman' in good colloquial English.

The use of '*the*' before the names of complaints is no longer fashionable, and '*the* rheumatism,' '*the* indigestion,' '*the* bronchitis,' etc., would be counted vulgarisms by many. Curiously enough, '*the* measles,' '*the* whooping-cough,' '*the* scarlet fever,' would still pass muster, although even in these cases the article might easily be, and often is, omitted.

There seems to be a distinct gulf between the speakers who say '*I* beg *your* pardon,' by way of apology, and reply, 'Oh, it's all right,' or 'It doesn't matter,' or 'Please don't mention it,' and those who say 'Beg pardon,' omitting the pronouns, and expect the answer, 'Granted.'

The language of schoolboys presents many good examples of a class dialect. There are words and turns of phrase which are common to all schoolboys; there are also others which are confined to particular schools. Most large schools possess more or less extensive lists of words which appear to be peculiar to themselves. The use of these is imposed by that most rigid of unwritten laws—schoolboy custom. Just as the use of certain words is essential, the abstention from others is as strongly enforced.

At Charterhouse, twenty years ago (and probably this is still the case), there were words which no boy in the School ever pronounced, constructions which

he never dreamt of using. The following are a few of these: '*Cake*' was never used, but always '*he*'; '*bun*' was tabooed, and '*stodger*' took its place; '*pater*,' a very general term amongst boys, was not allowed, but only '*governor*'; the definite article was never employed when speaking of things or institutions connected with the School—boys always said '*School*,' '*Class-room*,' '*Library*,' '*Chapel*,' '*Baths*,' '*Green*,' '*Long-room*' (the room in each house where the boys lived); '*Flogging*' or '*Birching*' was unknown, this invigorating process being known only as '*Swishing*'; the common abbreviation '*Prep*' for evening preparation was never heard, the proper term being '*Banco*'; the operation of thrashing, as administered by a Monitor, was designated '*Cocking up*.' A curious word to express what other schools call 'cheeky' was '*Festive*.' This word and the substantive '*Festivity*' implied rather more than 'cheeky, cheek,' and included, among several objectionable qualities, especially the possession of a greater degree of self-assertion than a boy's standing, from his place in the School, and the length of time he had been there, or his achievement in sports, were held to warrant. The word '*cheek*' would not have been tolerated.

The compulsory use of certain words in a school, to the exclusion of others, is, of course, an artificial process, but it closely resembles that selection of a particular vocabulary which, in maturer life, is dictated by fashion, or 'Good Form,' in a given social set or class.

3. Difference of Age occasions Differences in Vocabulary, etc.

We have seen that there are modes of pronunciation which become old-fashioned; so, also, phrase and idiom in colloquial speech pass out of fashion, and are given up. Fashion in this respect changes much more rapidly in racy, familiar language, than does pronunciation. The young may sometimes notice that their elders use words—not grand, learned words, but colloquial, even slang words—which they themselves would never dream of employing. Such are—'to *hand a lady out*,' instead of 'to take her in' (to dinner, etc.); 'to *quiz*,' instead of 'to *chaff*'; 'a *chimney-pot hat*,' instead of '*top-hat*'; '*cravat*,' instead of '*tie*'; '*surtout*,' instead of '*frock-coat*'; '*wristband*,' instead of '*cuff*'; '*to drink tea*,' instead of '*have tea*,' or '*come to tea*'; '*to take wine with*' some one, instead of 'to *drink his health*,' and so on.

The list might be extended indefinitely. Observant young people may have noted such things as these, but what is, perhaps, more frequently brought to their notice is that, when speaking to an old person, they are reprimanded for using some expression which is an indispensable part of the conversational style of the day. Thus, the use of '*awful*,' '*awfully*,' not rarely calls forth the censure of the aged, who do not understand that to persons under sixty, and to some much older, if they live much among the young, 'awfully' before an adjective is as colourless as '*very*.' '*Infamous*' is another word which shocks old people, who consider it a ridiculously strong term as it is commonly applied nowadays.

Yet it simply means 'very bad' when used of things, and when applied to persons, it frequently has absolutely no meaning at all, and implies no disapproval of him on whom it is bestowed. '*Decent*' is now a very frequent term of praise, both of a hearty, as well as of a faint, and non-committal kind. Old people, taking the word only in its literal sense, fail to understand why it should be applied equally to a man, a dinner, a horse, a game, a sermon, or a play.

4. Difference of Sex associated with Differences of Vocabulary.

Just as there are many words and expressions, commonly used by men, which women avoid, or formerly did so, as being too forcible or too slangy, so there are also others which men seldom or never make use of. The advance of female education has greatly reduced the number of the former. Of the latter, such words as '*poorly*' (for ill), '*tiresome*,' '*enjoyable*,' and such phrases as '*sweetly pretty*,' '*very, very hot*,' '*dear, dear!*' '*oh, bother!*' are examples.

We have now described and illustrated the chief circumstances which account for the considerable diversity which exists in English as spoken at the present time. The fact of the existence of these differences has a most important bearing, not only upon the question of the development of our language, but also upon the view which we shall take of the nature and habits of a living tongue. It should be noted that we have awarded, as a rule, neither censure nor praise to this or that variety of English.

We have been content merely to attempt to show that variety exists, and to help the reader to know what he may observe for himself. Our attitude to forms of English which differ from our own should, in the first instance, be merely one of curiosity. We collect varieties in speech, as an entomologist brings together different kinds of moths. We do not love the one and despise the other: we simply observe and compare them.

as most people tend to, naturally, and unconsciously, in speaking, when the necessary conditions are present.

Some of the examples which follow have already been mentioned by way of illustrating the general principle. We shall now group the examples more systematically into classes, our chief object at present being to direct attention to some of the tendencies to *Combinative Change* which are observable in the English which we speak and hear day by day.

(*a*) **Influence of Sound upon Sound—(1)** *Voicing and Unvoicing.*—Voicing of voiceless consonants after another voiced consonant or a vowel: *s* of plural or of possessive case pronounced like *z*—dog-*s*, web-*s*, egg-*s*, foe-*s*, eye-*s*, play-*s*, compared with hat-*s*, cap-*s*, trick-*s*; -*ed* of past tense, or past participle, pronounced as *t*—tipp-*ed*, track-*ed*, quaff-*ed*.

(2) *Unvoicing, accompanied by Another Change.*—In the combination *t*, followed by *y*-sound, the latter is unvoiced and also becomes -*sh*-: 'Did it hit you?' ('*hit you*' *becomes* '*hitchu*' *in rapid speech*); crea*t*ure, fea*t*ure (formerly pronounced *kreetyure*, *feetyure*, now with the '*ch*-sound,' that is, *t* and *sh*). Similarly, in such combinations as 'me*t* you,' 'Is tha*t* you?' 'I be*t* you anything,' etc., the *t* and *y* tend to pass into -*tch*-.

(3) The *z*-sound followed by *y*-sound passes into the sound heard initially in French *jamais*, and finally in French *rouge*: 'I didn't come to prai*s*e you,' 'plea*s*e yourself'; the same sound is also heard in 'pleasure,' 'azure,' 'leisure.'

(4) In the combination *n* and *g*, *n* tends to become *ng*: 'He was drowned *in* going to save his brother'

(the '*in*' in such a sentence is often pronounced '*ing*' by careless speakers.

(5) In the combination *n* before *p*, *b*, *f*, or *v*, *n* often becomes *m*: 'O*n* payment,' 'o*n* board' (pronounced '*om*' in both cases); 'i*n* fact,' 'i*n* vain' (pronounced '*im*' in each case).

(6) Consonant differently pronounced according to the vowel which follows. Contrast the *k*-sound in '*k*een,' '*k*ick,' '*K*ate,' etc., with that in '*c*one,' '*c*art,' '*c*ut,' '*c*aught,' '*c*ool,' etc.

(7) Vowel differently pronounced according to whether it is followed by another vowel or by a consonant. Contrast the vowel *naturally* uttered in 'th*e* eye,' 'th*e* ear,' 'th*e* arm,' etc., with that heard in 'th*e* nose,' 'th*e* leg,' 'th*e* mouth,' etc.

(8) Consonant lost or retained according to whether a consonant or vowel follows. *r* is not heard in 'fa*r* be it from me,' 'pu*r*e nonsense,' 'fo*r* me,' etc., *before another consonant*, nor *finally* in 'Is it fa*r*?' 'The water's quite pu*r*e,' 'What's it fo*r*?' but it is heard in the same words when the following word begins with a vowel, as: 'fa*r* away,' 'pu*r*e air,' 'fo*r* ever.'

It should be noted that it in no way affects the point at issue if some of the pronunciations just described are considered by some people to be 'incorrect,' 'slovenly,' or 'careless.' We are not now setting up a standard of elegance of speech, but are indicating what actually *does* take place in English pronunciation in the unstudied language of thousands, if not millions, of persons. Even if the pronunciations described were one and all 'vulgar,' which they certainly are not, provided that

they actually occur, which they certainly do, they would be just as instructive as if they were the height of refinement. As a matter of fact, the most fastidious speakers, when they are off their guard, are 'guilty' of many of those very combinative changes in pronunciation which they condemn theoretically. For the moment, no judgment, for good or ill, is pronounced on any possible mode of English speech.

(*b*) Influence of the Presence or Absence of Stress upon English Sounds.—(1) Double forms of prepositions, and auxiliary verbs resulting from strong and weak stress. (See short list of these given, pp. 39-40 above.)

(2) Loss of the initial aspirate of pronouns (*he*, *his*, *him*, *her*) in rapid consecutive speech, in sentences where these words do not receive stress. Contrast 'I told *him he*'d better come and see you'—where 'him' and 'he,' being unstressed, have either a very weak aspirate, or none at all—with the pronunciation of the above pronouns as isolated words, when they always retain the aspirate, or with such a sentence as, 'It doesn't matter who is absent, if only *he* is there; *his* presence is most important,' where the strong emphatic stress maintains the aspirate.

(3) Vowels in pronouns, 'you' 'he,' 'we,' 'she,' altered according to whether they have strong or weak stress in the sentence. The vowel in '*you*' is that of 'pool' when stressed; that of 'pull' when unstressed; the vowel of 'he,' 'we,' etc., is that of '*free*' when stressed, that of 'bit' when unstressed. (See notes on these sounds, p. 32 above.)

(4) The vowel in the second element of a com-

pound is often different from that of the simple word, through absence of stress in the former case. Compare the sound in 'm*a*n' with that in 'gentle-m*a*n,' 'Frenchm*a*n,' and that in 'm*e*n' with the vowel of 'gentlem*e*n,' etc.; the vowel in 'ford' with that in the second syllable of 'Oxford,' etc.

The above examples in I. (*a*) and (*b*) are intended to illustrate some of the chief processes of *combinative sound change* which take place at the present day. Many other examples of a similar character may be observed by the student for himself, and these should be carefully collected.

II. Isolative Sound Changes in Present-day English.

Besides sound changes which are due to the influence of other sounds, or of stress, there is another class which is equally interesting and important. In the course of time the pronunciation of a language undergoes changes which appear to arise and develop in certain sounds; so far as we can tell, without the influence of surrounding sounds, or of stress, the changes are due to a natural and spontaneous tendency on the part of the speakers of the language to pronounce the old sounds in a new way. This class of independent sound changes are known as *Isolative Changes.* The new pronunciation comes about so gradually that even those who live a great many years are unaware that their own speech, and that of those around them, is changing. They are, as a rule, unable to compare the speech current in their boyhood with that of their old age.

We have already noted (p. 56) that the speech of very old people often presents some perceptible

differences, to the ear of the careful observer, from that of the young and rising generation.

The examples given above to illustrate this, however, were not really of the nature of actual change of sound, but only of a different distribution of the same sounds.

It now remains to inquire whether it is possible to discover in the speech of the rising generation of the present day—of people, that is, of from ten to twenty years of age—any appreciable differences of pronunciation, any tendencies towards altogether new sounds, compared with the manner of speech of persons of the same education and class who belong to an earlier generation—persons, that is to say, between thirty-five and fifty-five at the present time.

Considering the question from the point of view of the latter class, I can perceive tendencies in the younger generation which are either lacking in my own speech, or so little developed as to be inappreciable. On the other hand, I am conscious of sharing, to some slight extent, tendencies of change and modes of pronunciation with the younger generation, which I am unable to trace in the English of persons twenty or thirty years older than myself. These peculiarities include both actual differences of sound and different distribution of the same sounds. (On this distinction, see pp. 50-54 above.) The mere differences of habit in the use of sounds in certain words are easy to note. The new tendencies towards a different series of sounds—that is, an actual modification of the sounds of the older generation—are far more difficult to fix, and more difficult to describe in a popular treatise like the present, in which it

would be absurd to assume an exact acquaintance with scientific Phonetics on the part of those for whom it is primarily intended. At the same time, the whole question is so important, since it involves catching English pronunciation in the very act of changing—that is, in the act of making part of its history—that an attempt must be made, with the imperfect means at our disposal for such an exposition, to give some indication of the changes and tendencies in question.

If we can indicate in what directions the points for observation lie, the intelligent student will be on the alert, and personal observation will soon give definiteness to his ideas. The following remarks apply only to the Standard form of English, and in no way to the speech of those who are definitely influenced by Regional Dialects. On the conception of Standard English, and of Regional Dialects, see pp. 46-49 above.

Examples of Isolative Changes in Progress at the Present Time.

1. Loss of Vowel Murmur.—(See notes on pp. 32-33, 35 (*f*), 36 (*g*), etc., above.) The combinations *-ore*, *-our*, *-or-*, and *war-*, followed by another consonant, are still pronounced by many with the *aw*-sound (as in *saw*), followed by the vowel murmur. Probably this pronunciation is already distinctly old-fashioned (when not a provincialism) before consonants—that is, in words like '*fourth*,' '*forth*,' '*ford*,' '*sword*,' '*port*,' '*warp*,' etc. In such cases the usual pronunciation of people of, say, from thirty to fifty years of age, and, of course, of the younger generation, seems to be

simply 'awd,' etc., without any vowel murmur before the consonant. Thus, no difference is made between '*sword*' and '*sawed*,' '*Lord*' and '*Laud*,' '*drawers*' and '*draws*,' and so on. This is to a certain extent a combinative change.

But many people whose pronunciation has lost the vowel murmur in the above cases still retain it in cases where no consonant follows, as in '*pour*,' '*war*,' '*floor*,' '*core*,' etc. Now, the younger generation (and many persons of middle age also) pronounce no vowel murmur in these cases any more than in the former, but pronounce *pour* like *paw*, *floor* like *flaw*, *core* like *caw*, *sore* and *soar* like *saw*, and so on.

2. **Loss of Vowel Murmur, and Alteration of Preceding Vowel.**—The combinations *-ure*, *-ur*, a vowel sound, as in *sure*, *pure*, *cure*, *endure*, *fury*, etc., are pronounced by the older generation like '*sewer*' (or '*shewer*'), '*pewer*,' '*feweri*,' etc.; that is, the *-ur* has a sound like the word *you*, followed by the vowel murmur. The pronunciation of the middle and younger generations is simply the *aw*-sound, with no murmur after it, and the sound of *y* (as in *yacht*) before it, which might be roughly expressed by '*yaw*'—thus, '*pyaw*,' '*kyaw*,' '*fyawry*,' etc. Note that the new pronunciation '*shaw*,' for *sure*, shows also a combinative change of '*sy*' to '*sh*' (*cf.* p. 29 above).

3. **Loss of *r* between Vowels.** — Although this sound has long been lost, in Standard English, *before consonants* (see p. 31 above), it is retained by most speakers of thirty and upwards, in the middle of words before vowels and at the end of words, in

sentences where the next word begins with a vowel (see p. 72 (8) above).

Now, there appears to be a well-established tendency among the younger generation to omit *r* (1) in phrases like 'fo*r* ever,' 'I'm su*re* of it' (pronounced 'sh*aw* of it'), 'the*re* are plenty,' 'fa*r* away,' 'fou*r* apples' (='f*aw* apples'), and so on. But the *r*- sound is not only disappearing at the *end of words* before the vowel of the next, but the tendency is being extended (2) to *r* between vowels *in the middle of words.* The result is that quite young people tend to omit the sound in words like 'fu*r*y' (pronounced 'fyáw-y'), 'fa*i*ry,' 'fie*r*y,' 'pou*r*ing' (pronounced 'páw-ing'), 'Victo*r*ia' (pronounced 'Victawya'), etc. So far, the present writer has rarely heard the *r* dropped between vowels in the middle of words, except in cases where the sound immediately preceding the *r* was either a *long vowel* or a diphthong. Doubtless in time the tendency will also spread to words where the first vowel is short, such as 've*r*y,' 'Ha*rr*y,' 'hu*rr*y.' It should be said that the disappearance of *r* seems to be further advanced in cases belonging to (1) above than in (2).

This tendency seems directly opposed to that of an earlier generation of speakers to develop an *r*-sound, to avoid hiatus, when two vowels occurred together, and to say 'put you*r* umbrella-*r*-up,' 'the idea-*r*-of it,' 'Victoria-*r*-our Queen,' and 'draw*r*ing' for 'drawing,' etc.

4. Loss of Second Element of Diphthong before a Murmur Vowel.—(1) Words like 'f*i*re,' 'h*i*gher,' 's*i*re,' 'pr*i*or,' '*i*ron,' contain in the pronunciation of the older and part of the middle generation the

diphthong popularly known as '*long i*' (see p. 35 (*e*) above), followed by the murmur vowel. The new tendency is to suppress the second element (the '*i*'-sound, as in '*it*') before the murmur vowel. The result is that instead of 'long *i*,' followed by the murmur vowel, we get simply a shortened form of the first vowel in '*fa*ther,' followed by the murmur. Thus, instead of the older '*fī-er*,' we get '*fā-er*,' which differs from '*far*' only in having a final murmur after the *ā*. Taking this in conjunction with what has been said in the preceding paragraph (3), we see that instead of '*fī-er-i*' (with the *r*-sound pronounced) for 'fiery,' the pronunciation of the younger generation is '*fā-e(r)-y*,' with no *r*-sound and no *i*-sound in the first syllable. The other *i*-diphthong (see p. 35 (*d*) above) tends in the same direction before the murmur vowel. Thus, the pronunciation of '*prayer*' so as to rhyme with '*care*,' and of '*layer*' so that it is identical with '*lair*,' is already well established among the middle generation. Now, however, such words as '*player*,' '*betrayer*,' are following in the same path.*

(2) The *u*-diphthongs (see p. 34 (*a*) and (*b*) above) similarly lose the *u*-element before the murmur vowel. Such words as '*slower*,' '*goer*,' '*lower*,' '*rower*,' etc., tend to become almost '*raw-er*,' '*law-er*,' etc. In this case the first and remaining element of the diphthong undergoes modification. The same process involves the *ou*-diphthong (as in '*house*,' etc.).

* For many speakers, the simple words '*betray*,' '*play*,' influence the pronunciation of '*betray*-er,' '*play*-er,' so that the -*ay* ('long-*a*') preserves its full sound before the murmur vowel in these and similar words.

The diphthong is no longer clearly heard, among the younger generation, in such words as '*power*,' '*shower*,' '*flour*' and '*flower*,' '*tower*,' etc. It would seem that what happens in these words is that the first element of the diphthong is very slightly lengthened, and then, in place of the full *u*-sound of the second element, only a very slight bringing together of the lips takes place, which is instantly removed, and finally comes the murmur vowel. It is this slight and momentary action of the lips which alone appears to distinguish '*tower*' from '*tire*' in the new pronunciation, while '*tar*' is distinguished from both by the absence of any vowel murmur and the greater length of the vowel *ā*. If this tendency continues, one would expect that at last the murmur itself would vanish, thus leaving no distinction between '*tire*' and '*tar*.' Later still, possibly the lip-action in 'tower,' etc., will disappear, levelling it with the present '*tire*,' and with the subsequent loss of the final vowel murmur, '*hour*' and '*tower*' will be completely levelled under '*are*' and '*tar*,' together with '*ire*' and '*tire*.'

5. The substitution of *-n'* for *-ng* has already been discussed (p. 54 above).

6. The spread of the *aw*-sound to many words which formerly had the 'short *o*' sound, as in '*not*,' seems to be typical of the pronunciation of the younger generation. (For the class of words referred to, see p. 53 above.)

7. Change in the '*ŭ*' sound in 'p*u*t,' 'g*oo*d,' 'sh*ou*ld,' etc.—There appears to be a distinct tendency to 'unround' this vowel. (For explanation of term, see p. 22 above.) It is impossible to

describe the process or the resultant sound without a proper phonetic terminology, but to make the matter clear to those who are not yet trained in Phonetics, we may say that the new tendency is apparently in the direction of the sound in 'but.' The new sound is far from having reached the sound of 'but' as yet, but if the tendency really gains ground, and progresses, that is the sound which we may expect to hear fifty years hence as the regular received pronunciation. If the reader wishes to compare the old and new sounds, he should confront a man of upwards of fifty with a youth between fifteen and twenty-five, and by listening to their alternate utterances of such words as those given in the heading of this paragraph he will probably perceive the difference.

B. Sound Differences in Closely Related Words in Present-day English which are not due to Tendencies now in Operation.

There are in Present-day English many pairs, and also whole groups, of words which, although very similar, if not identical, in meaning, and sufficiently alike in form to suggest some kind of relationship, are yet distinguished by certain differences in their vowel or consonant sounds, or in both.

The differences in the words referred to cannot be explained by any tendency to, or process of sound change, now active, which affects some of these words and not others, and thus causes the differences between them. Nothing in Modern English can produce these differences, and we shall

therefore, for the present, not attempt to explain the differences of form, but shall merely enumerate a considerable number of such pairs or groups of words, most of which will be perfectly familiar to the reader, although in some cases he may not have thought of the relationship.

(*a*) Differences affecting Vowel Sounds—(1) *Differences primarily dependent upon Alterations of Quantity.*—*Breathe*—*breath*; *child*—*children*; de*file*—*fil*th; one—*an*; *leap*—*leapt*; *doom*—king-*dom*; Kings*town* (in Ireland)—Kings*ton*-on-Thames; *wide*—*wid*th; *lea*—Beck-ley, etc.; *white*—*Whit*-by; *south*—*south*ern; *goose*—*gos*ling; *sheep*—*shep*-herd; h*ouse*—h*u*ssy (huzzif); *out*—*ut*most; *street*—*Stret*-ford.

(2) *Differences involving primarily Alteration in the Quality or Nature of the Vowel.*—(*a*) *Cow*—*kine*; *drought*—*dry*; *mouse*—*mice*; *thought*—*think*; *louse*—*lice*; *foul*—de-*file*; *foot*—*feet*; *doom*—*deem*; *goose*—*geese*; *food*—*feed*; *brother*—*brethren*; *taught*—*teach*; *sought*—*seek*, be-*seech*; *hot*—*heat*; *broad*—*bread*th; *blood*—*bleed*; *lode*- (stone, star, etc.)—*lead*; *dole*—*deal*; *gold*—*gild*; *fox*—*vixen*; *full*—*fill*; *thumb*—*thimble*; *bond*—*bend*; *whole*—*heal*; *borough*—*Bury*; *bought*—*buy*; *broom*—*bramble*.

(*β*) *Cool*—*cold*; *cock*—*chick*; *bite*—*bitter*; *water*—*wet*; *sit*—*sat*—*seat*—*set* (p. 197); *field*—*fold*; *bind*—*band*—*bound*; *bear*—*bier*—*bore*; *ride*—*rode* and *road*; *freeze*—*froze*; *brought*—*bring*; *stock*—*stack*; *blind*—*blend*.

(*b*) Differences affecting the Consonants.—*C*are—*ch*eer; *c*ool and *c*old—*ch*ill; *c*ock—*ch*ick; coo*k*—ki*tch*-en; see*k*—be-see*ch*; li*ke*—ly*ch*-gate; han*g*—hin*ge*; drin*k*—dren*ch*; stin*k*—sten*ch*; ban*k*—ben*ch*;

think—though*t*; see*k*—sou*gh*t; brin*g*—brou*gh*t; wi*f*e—wi*v*es; li*f*e—li*v*es; brea*th*—brea*th*e; sou*th*—sou*th*ern; o*f*—o*ff*; i*s*—a*r*e; wa*s*—we*r*e; lo*s*e—lo*r*n, and for-lo*r*n; free*z*e—fro*r*e (obsolete for frozen); dra*w*—dra*y*; slau*gh*ter—sla*y*; da*w*n—da*y*; la*y* and li*e*—le*dg*e; fl*y*—fle*dg*e; mi*gh*t—ma*i*n; bli*gh*t—bla*i*n.

All the words in the above lists which are connected by a stroke are historically and etymologically related—that is, the various forms go back to one original form. The variety of development which one original 'root' or 'base' has undergone in the course of time is the result of different *Combinative* influences. None of the above varieties are due to forces now at work in English. The causes of the differences, which are of various nature, and belong to different periods of the language, have long since ceased to exist. We see, however, that the results remain. It should be noted that these differences occur, not only in what are known as different parts of the same verb, or between the singular and plural of the same noun, but often, also, in words, closely related in meaning, it is true (such as *gold—gild*), but now quite independent words representing different parts of speech. The explanation of these changes, as we have said, is to be found in the remote past history of English. The student should bear in mind that some of the *Combinative* influences which we have noted as occurring in activity at the present day are tending to alter the forms of words just as similar forces have done in the past.

The student should also try to collect other relics of past changes in Present-day English.

CHAPTER VII

SPEAKING AND WRITING

We have already pointed out, in the first chapter of this book, that originally the written language is merely a reproduction, in another form, of the spoken language.

When men first began to use written symbols of an alphabetic kind, all they could do was to make as faithful an expression as was possible by this means of the language which they spoke.

Thus, the symbols of the alphabet, each endowed with a phonetic value, were used to represent, as closely as their nature would permit, the sounds which occurred in the *speech* of him who traced them. Similarly, the general structure of the sentences, the words and expressions used—in a word, the Style of ordinary spoken English—were simply set down in writing. In the beginnings of prose writing the differences which we now observe between the language of literature and that of ordinary life did not exist.

It is true that most races develop song and poetry, which is learnt by heart, and handed on by word of mouth, long before they have learnt the art of writing.

The language of this, as of all poetry, would differ in several ways from ordinary colloquial speech. For one thing, it was in metre, and for another, it would necessarily soon become archaic—that is, old-fashioned, as compared with the colloquial idiom. For we must reflect that the spoken language of everyday life is perpetually changing, and would soon diverge from the language of traditional poetry, since this, from the nature of the case, could not keep pace with the colloquial language. One was fixed, and handed on from generation to generation in nearly the form in which it was composed; the other was ever changing and acquiring new features, while it modified or lost the old.

First Attempts at Writing Language.

We may suppose that when language was first written down, the early attempts would be of a very simple character. Names of Kings and other great personages were inscribed on stones, and later on a sentence descriptive of those who had borne the names; single words, supposed to possess a magical character, were graven upon sword-hilts or rings, to act as charms. Such were the uses to which letters were first put by our own ancestors. The earliest characters employed by the Germanic peoples, of whom the English tribes formed one group, were strange angular letters, known as *Runes*. This word simply meant mystery, and the reason of its use in this connexion may have been due either to the fact that writing was looked upon as something mysterious and uncanny, or to the circumstance

that the characters were chiefly employed for magic purposes. The shape of the earliest forms of the Runic letters was such that they were eminently suitable for cutting or scratching upon hard substances, such as stone, metal, or wood. The very word '*write*,' which we use so commonly, meant originally to 'scratch' or 'tear.' In German the word *reissen*, which is descended from the same word as our '*write*,' still means simply to '*tear*,' and has no connexion, in that language, with the idea of '*writing*' in our sense.

It is doubtful whether the *Runes* were in frequent and widespread use, or whether they were ever employed, in very early times, for long documents. It is true that a cross at Ruthwell in Dumfriesshire, which dates from the Anglo-Saxon period, bears a portion of a well-known Old English poem in the Runic character, but this was made after the other kind of writing, in characters borrowed from the Irish, but originally of Roman origin, had been introduced into this country, and had superseded the old letters for all practical purposes. The new characters were not used by the English before their conversion to Christianity in the seventh century. The oldest documents which we possess, written in the newly acquired characters, are charters or grants of land by Kings, written on parchment, in the seventh and eighth centuries. These documents are mainly in Latin, but contain a few English words—names of places, people, and landmarks.

It does not seem probable that the old songs, which people knew by heart, were written down very early. In any case, we do not possess any early

will allow. It is surely clear that in these circumstances people do not use the same symbol to express several different sounds, unless they have fewer symbols than they have sounds to express. It is also certain that men do not begin by writing down symbols which express no sound at all, as in Modern English *bright*, where *gh* do not stand for any consonantal sounds which occur in the pronunciation of the word.

But supposing that the spelling has become fixed, because age after age people continue to write as their ancestors wrote hundreds of years before. In this case, if the pronunciation changes, which it certainly has done in English, the spelling ceases, on the whole, to be phonetic; for with the advance of time pronunciation grows farther and farther away from it. The only languages which are as nearly as possible phonetically spelt at the present day are those in which the pronunciation has hardly changed at all since the spelling was fixed, like Welsh and Finnish. If, in addition to this conservatism in pronunciation, the set of symbols employed is very complete, so that every sound which exists in the language has a special symbol to represent it, as is practically the case in Russian, then we get as near perfection in the correspondence between sound and symbol as it is possible to attain.

In Old English (that is, the language from the beginnings of our history down to about 1050) the symbols were very nearly, though not quite, adequate to express the pronunciation. In addition to this, although the spelling of each age was fairly fixed, still, from time to time, as very remarkable changes

English History. The great Saint and Scholar Bede wrote—in Latin, it is true—a history of the Church in England, wherein, incidentally, a great deal of such other history concerning our people as he could gather from well-authenticated tradition, and from reliable eyewitnesses, is also recorded. This he did in the eighth century.

More than a century later, the greatest King, warrior, and patriot that this country has ever seen caused Bede's History to be translated into the English of his day. King Alfred was no less admirable in peace than in war, and we may date the beginnings of English Prose, so far as we have any record of it, from the labours of himself and his Bishops. He started a regular Chronicle of the principal events of each year in England; he translated works on History, Religion, and Philosophy; he reissued and amended the Laws of his ancestors. Under this Prince learning and piety, and the arts of peace were fostered and established.

Now, when the habit of composing works in a language and of writing them down becomes frequent, two results necessarily follow: One is that a fixed system of spelling, which practically every one adopts, becomes established; the other is that what is known as a *Literary Style* develops, which is different from, and in some ways better, more eloquent, and more exact than, the style of colloquial speech.

These points may be considered separately.

1. Divergence of Spelling from Pronunciation.—We assume that in all cases, when a language is first written down, the spelling is as nearly phonetic as the set of symbols at the disposal of the writers

will allow. It is surely clear that in these circumstances people do not use the same symbol to express several different sounds, unless they have fewer symbols than they have sounds to express. It is also certain that men do not begin by writing down symbols which express no sound at all, as in Modern English *bright*, where *gh* do not stand for any consonantal sounds which occur in the pronunciation of the word.

But supposing that the spelling has become fixed, because age after age people continue to write as their ancestors wrote hundreds of years before. In this case, if the pronunciation changes, which it certainly has done in English, the spelling ceases, on the whole, to be phonetic; for with the advance of time pronunciation grows farther and farther away from it. The only languages which are as nearly as possible phonetically spelt at the present day are those in which the pronunciation has hardly changed at all since the spelling was fixed, like Welsh and Finnish. If, in addition to this conservatism in pronunciation, the set of symbols employed is very complete, so that every sound which exists in the language has a special symbol to represent it, as is practically the case in Russian, then we get as near perfection in the correspondence between sound and symbol as it is possible to attain.

In Old English (that is, the language from the beginnings of our history down to about 1080) the symbols were very nearly, though not quite, adequate to express the pronunciation. In addition to this, although the spelling of each age was fairly fixed, still, from time to time, as very remarkable changes

in pronunciation developed, the system of spelling was gradually adapted so as to record them.

The process of adapting spelling to pronunciation continued in English until soon after the introduction of printing in 1475. Since then few changes in spelling, and these, for the most part, not of a phonetic character, have taken place, although pronunciation has continued to change all the time. Hence, at the present time, our spelling is very unsatisfactory. We shall return later on in more detail to the explanation of some of the more remarkable features of English spelling.

2. **Divergence of Literary Style from that of the Spoken Language.**—The style of prose, as we have already said, cannot differ, in the beginnings, from the style of the spoken language. The language of books at the present day is very different from that of ordinary colloquial speech. This difference is due to the fact that writers follow a *Literary Tradition*, and mould their style upon *other writings*—at least, to a great extent. In so far as writers follow literary tra[illegible] their written style will differ from the languag[illegible] day life; in so far as they write more or [illegible] speak, the style of their books will agree [illegible] colloquial English. But when the writin[illegible] is in its infancy, there can be no litera[illegible] behind, and in this case prose style ca[illegible] the best, clearest, and most expressiv[illegible] can be found in Spoken Language.

But a literary tradition is soon cr[illegible] phrases, turns of expression, which a[illegible] speech of common life, and whi[illegible]

natural and suitable, appear too trivial, toc common, and devoid of sufficient dignity for a permanent record of great events, or the treatment of solemn and lofty themes.

Whence can a literary language come in the first instance? What sources of vocabulary and phraseology, other than colloquial speech, are at the disposal of a writer in a language which as yet possesses no literary tradition?

Sources of Literary Style.

The first of these would appear to be the language of oratory. Even the most barbarous peoples, such as the Red Indians of North America, or the Maories of New Zealand, who, of course, have nothing in the shape of written literature, still have considerable natural gifts of oratory. The art of eloquence, or the faculty of speaking in such a way as to stir large companies of people, to rouse their enthusiasm for a common cause, or to kindle their respect and loyalty for a chief or a leader, is one that must be practised from the moment that men are banded together in tribes or armies, under the authority of chief or captain, for purposes either of war or peaceful communal life.

The devices of orators to command attention, to interest and persuade an audience, are well known. Expressive gestures, dramatic tones of voice, and phrases which strike the imagination and appeal to the hearts or minds of the hearers, are all brought into play. We are especially concerned with the last. The well-known words and phrases of every-

day life do not suffice by themselves for the orator's effect. He uses a vocabulary which is less commonplace—a diction which is more stately, elaborate, and pointed than those of ordinary conversation. His model is the traditional language of the poet or minstrel, and of the oratory of his race. The characteristics of these forms of speech are that they are more or less remote and different from colloquial speech, and that they are more or less archaic—that is, old-fashioned. The comparatively high polish which the language of minstrelsy and of oratory often shows, even among peoples who have no written literature, and the care with which these are cultivated, frequently for long ages, makes them the natural models of the first efforts towards literary style, when the need for this is felt.

Another source from which the language of literature is enriched and beautified is the vocabulary and sentence-structure of a foreign language with a higher and older literary development. In Modern English, for instance, such a word as *coruscate*, instead of the homelier English *glitter*, is often used for the purpose of giving variety and dignity to a sentence.

These, then, are the two main sources of development of literary style in the first instance: the traditional poetry and oratory of the native language, and elements of vocabulary and structure adopted from foreign languages.

The chief features which distinguish a literary from a colloquial style are that the former is archaic, that it is less familiar and commonplace, and that it is more careful and deliberate than the latter.

The style of public speaking lies between that of

books and that of everyday life. It is rather more archaic and careful than the latter, rather less so than the former.

Speaking and Writing in Modern English.

If we now apply what has been said generally of the distinction between the language of Literature and Colloquial Speech to our native tongue, we find that it holds good.

It is sometimes said, though not by way of praise, that a man talks as though he were 'addressing a public meeting,' or as though he were 'delivering a lecture.' This means that there is a noticeable difference between the English which we are accustomed to expect in ordinary familiar conversation, and that which we expect from the platform or the pulpit. To introduce the style of a lecture, a public speech, or a sermon, into private life and intercourse is an offence against good taste which is commonly resented and condemned.

But a still more serious charge is sometimes brought against pompous and pedantic people—namely, that they 'talk like a book.' This is even worse than 'lecturing' instead of carrying on an easy and natural conversation. The style of books is even more archaic, and more unsuited for the requirements of ordinary friendly converse, than that of public speech.

We see, on reflection, that in Modern English there are at least these three main types of language: two forms of spoken English, that of private life

and that of public oration; and in addition the language of books.

The language of the public speaker is liable to almost infinite variation in the degree of homeliness which it displays; sometimes it is so measured, highly wrought, and lofty in diction that it is scarcely distinguishable from literary style. Again, it may tend in the opposite direction, towards extreme colloquialism. The precise nature of good oratorical style is determined by the occasion, the subject, and by the size of the audience. It must not be supposed that we assert that the three styles of English we have referred to are so distinct one from the other that they do not shade almost imperceptibly into each other. The natural conversational style of people who have much to do with books is liable to be much influenced thereby, and to them many words and phrases are habitual which in the mouths of other less cultured persons would seem unnatural and unsuitable, although used in similar circumstances.

But the written and the spoken language, among all classes of speakers, constantly act and react upon one another. The language of ordinary life, directly or indirectly, is always being influenced by the literature of the age; but far more important is the influence which the colloquial speech of any period exerts upon the language of literature. We shall see that the close connexion between spoken and written language, which exists under healthy circumstances, is the life of the latter, and the chief means whereby it is vitalized and made a good instrument to express the spirit of the age.

If we wish to see the connexion between the language of literature and spoken language in a proper light, it is of the utmost importance to realize that spoken language comes first: it is not derived from books; it has an origin which is necessarily altogether independent of literature; it has a life and a history which are separate and distinct from those of the written language; and if this had no existence at all, language, which is uttered, heard, and handed on from generation to generation, would still continue to live and develop.

Nothing is more mistaken than the view which is sometimes taught, that the colloquial style is less '*correct*' than that of books, and that such contractions, for instance, as *isn't*, *can't they're* (they are), *I've*, *he'll*, and hundreds of others which are habitual to all good speakers of English, are in reality vulgarisms, which 'correct' speakers should avoid. The fact is, that these forms are in many cases the *only* 'correct' forms in colloquial speech, and to use *is not*, *they are*, *he will*, and so on, would be pedantic or worse, if that be possible. Whether it is at all times suitable and convenient to use these colloquial forms in public speaking is an entirely different question, and one which the good taste of the speaker must decide, with proper regard to the occasion and the audience.

The use of literary or semi-literary words and expressions in colloquial speech is often a worse offence than the use of colloquial expressions in public speaking or in writing. Good writers know by instinct just how far familiar expressions may be introduced into a literary production; good speakers

feel, in the same may, just where to draw the line, in colloquial speech, between what is expressive and appropriate on the one hand, and on the other, what would be pompous and affected.

When children first try to write, an essay, let us say, they have to learn that much that is perfectly 'right,' and permissible in ordinary conversation, is trivial and out of place in a serious, written prose. They must learn literary terms, and must further learn how far these can be mingled with more familiar words. The precise value of a word, whether as an element in literature or in speech, can only be felt and understood by practice and experience. We need to know not merely the bare meaning of a word or phrase, but what are the associations of ideas which it calls up. This is the difficult lesson of every one who is learning to speak and write a language, whether it be his own or a foreign tongue. Foreigners make terrible mistakes by mixing up the colloquial and the more elevated styles in writing English. Thus, a native Indian writer, who compiled, in English, the life of a relative, referred to this gentleman's appointment as a Judge of the Supreme Court as '*altogether judicious and tip-top.*'

Again, when he visited the house where the Judge had died suddenly, he found '*a house of mourning, confusion everywhere—in fact, a pretty kettle of fish.*' We have here examples of expressions which, under other circumstances, would be perfectly proper, but which become ridiculous by being applied to occasions and in a context where they have no possible place.

Finally, we must remember that words *in themselves*, and from their own nature, are neither good nor bad, dignified nor the reverse. They receive their power and their precise significance from long custom and usage. The associations which cluster round them, and whence they derive their peculiar expressiveness for good or ill, for noble or ignoble use, often reach back into the roots of our race's history, and that of our language. The degree of mastery of a language which we possess, and our power to use the appropriate word, depends very largely upon our knowledge of the precise feelings and ideas associated with each element in our vocabulary.

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE HISTORY OF A LANGUAGE—LANDMARKS IN THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH

How we know that Language changes.

HITHERTO we have dealt almost entirely with the English Language as it is at the present moment, and have only incidentally dwelt upon the fact that it was not always as we know it now, but that it has slowly reached its present form from something very different. In other words, we have up to this point hardly dwelt at all upon the fact that English, in common with all other languages which now exist, has a history in the past. The meaning of the phrase the *History of a Language* it is our present business to try to explain.

It is easy to say that English was once very different from what it is now, but, you may say, how can we know this?

Some of the observations which we made in a former chapter (pp. 56-57, 59, 67-68, 74-81) will put us on the track of the truth. In considering the varieties which exist at the present day in English speech, we saw that not only do people from different parts of the country, or belonging to different social divisions,

speak differently from each other, but that certain differences exist, in pronunciation, in vocabulary, and in phraseology, between people of the same class from the same district, but of different age. We have also indicated that certain tendencies to change can be detected in our own pronunciation, and that of our contemporaries.

Now, as a rule, the oldest people we are likely to meet belong to the same generation as our own grandfathers, or at most our great-grandfathers. As children we may meet and speak to persons of eighty years, or a little more—persons, that is, who are from two to three generations older than ourselves.

But if the English language can change so far in from sixty to eighty years that the differences are observable, it is surely obvious that 600, 800, 1,000, or 1,200 years ago, it must have been immensely different from its present form. For there is no reason to suppose that those things which we can actually observe now going on in language have not gone on in the past and from the earliest times. If English has changed more or less in sixty or eighty years, and is still changing, it is therefore reasonable to suppose that the longer the period we allow, the greater will the changes be. We can note the changes that have taken place in the comparatively short time mentioned, but how can we know what changes took place at earlier times, the language of which we can no longer hear?

Now, although we cannot hear the living voice of the people who lived hundreds of years ago, we can yet read what they wrote if it has been preserved. We have seen in Chapter VI. that our earliest know-

ledge of English from written sources goes back about 1,200 years. From the seventh century onwards we have an ever-increasing mass of writings, of all kinds, written in the English of the different periods. So much, then, as can be learnt from written forms of language, we can learn concerning the past of the English language during this long period.

It is clear that so far as changes in vocabulary, in grammar, and in phraseology, and the way of building sentences, are concerned, we have plenty of means of studying these in the written language. But as concerns pronunciation the case is different; we have only *symbols* or *letters*, and not the sounds themselves. How, then, can we tell what the pronunciation of English was like before the time of the oldest persons now living?

We have no absolutely *direct* means of discovering this, but fortunately we have other evidence which is pretty conclusive.

A. Changes in the Pronunciation of English.

There are four principal means of finding out the sounds used in English before the present day. These are: (1) changes in spelling; (2) the evidence of Rhymes; (3) comparison with other languages; (4) the testimony of writers in the past concerning their own pronunciation.

1. **Changes in Spelling.**—As we have seen, down to the introduction of Printing, English spelling changes from age to age in such a way that we cannot doubt but that in many cases changes of sound are implied. For instance, if down to the middle of

the twelfth century, or thereabouts, we find *ham*, *ban*, *stan*, *gat*, written for 'home,' 'bone,' 'stone,' 'goat,' and if after that date we find *hoom*, *boon*, *stoon*, *goot*, *got*, or *goat;* and if in all other words which had a long vowel, expressed by *a* in the first period, the spelling, in the second, is changed to *oo*, etc., we can hardly doubt that the two spellings express very different sounds. And since in Present-day English these words all have what we call 'a long *o*,' we are justified in assuming that when the spelling *o*, etc., comes in, the pronunciation has changed to a sound approximating to 'a long *o*-sound.'

2. The Evidence of Rhymes.—If we examine the words which occur as rhymes in the works of the English poets of the past, we find that a very large proportion of such words would make perfectly good rhymes at the present time. The cases where the older and more recent poetry agree in rhyming the same words tell us nothing, of course, concerning the precise nature of the pronunciation of the words in question at any given period; all we can gather from such evidence is that two or more words which have the same sound to-day, also had the same sound in earlier times. But so far as we can tell from this line of investigation alone, the actual sound which is common to a group of words may have been precisely the same in the days of Chaucer as at the present time.

But by the side of the very large majority of rhymes in the English poets from the days of Pope back to those of Chaucer which are the same as poets of the present day would use, there are others which no poet of the present day would employ, or

if he did so, the result would be, by common consent, a bad rhyme. We may give a few instances from Pope, Shakespeare, and Chaucer, of rhymes which we have reason to believe were good rhymes at the time the poets wrote, but which would not be good from the point of view of the actual pronunciation of English in our own time.

'Fine by defect and delicately *weak*,
Their happy spots the nice admirer *take*.'
Moral Essays, Epistle ii., ll. 43-4.

'Last night, her lord was all that's good and *great*;
A knave this morning, and his will a *cheat*.'
Ibid., ll. 141-2.

'While the gaunt mastiff growling at the gate,
Affrights the beggar whom he longs to eat.'
Moral Essays, Epistle iii., ll. 195-6.

'A hireling scribbler or a hireling peer,
Knight of the post corrupt, or of the shire,' etc.
Epistle to Arbuthnot, ll. 364-5.

'Whose word is truth, as sacred as *revered*
As heav'n's own oracles from altars *heard*.'
To Augustus, ll. 27-8.

'But for the wits of either Charles's *days*,
The mob of gentlemen who wrote with *ease*.'
Ibid., ll. 107-8.

'At length, by wholesome dread of statutes *bound*,
The poets learned to please, and not to *wound*.'
Ibid., *ll.* 257-8.

'Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join
The varying verse, the full resounding line,
The long majestic march, and energy divine.'
Ibid., *ll.* 267-9

A few examples of a similar kind from Shakespeare are:

> 'And midst the sentence so her accent *breaks*,
> That twice she doth begin ere once she *speaks*.'
> *Rape of Lucrece, M.* 566-7.

From the *Sonnets*: *Departest—convertest* (xi.); *herd—beard* (xii.); *art — convert* (xiv.); *come — tomb*; *deserts—parts*; *tongue—song* (xvii.); *brood—blood* (xix.); *created—defeated* (xx.); *beloved—removed* (xxv.); *past—waste*; *foregone—moan* (xxx.); *worth—forth* (xxxviii.); *feast—guest* (xlvii.).

From the poetry of Chaucer we learn not only that words which do not rhyme now did so in his day, implying a difference of vowel sound, but also that some words were differently accented then, and, further, that in many words syllables which modern language has lost we still retained in the fourteenth century. These last two points we deduce from the requirements of metre. In the following extracts the stress is marked in cases where it differs from present usage, and syllables now lost, but retained by Chaucer, are italicized. The examples are all from the *Knightes Tale*, and the numbers refer to the lines of that poem.

> 'To ransake in the tas of bodyes ded*e*
> Hem for to strepe of harneys and of wed*e*.'
> 148-9

> ['To ransack in the heap of dead bodies,
> In order to strip them of their armour and clothes.']

The word *weed* in this sense now survives only in the phrase *widow's weeds*.

'And myn is love as to a cr*ea*túre,
[*ea* pronounced as two vowels.
For which I told*e* thee myn aventúre.'
300-1.

'The pur*e* fettres on his shin*es* gret*e* [pure='very.']
Wer(e)n of his bittre salt*e* ter*es* wet*e*.'
421-2.

'To see my lady, that I love and serve
In her presénce I recch*e* not to sterv*e*.'
[*recche*='reck'; *to sterve*='to die,' 'if I die.
539-40.

'In gaud*e* grene hir statue cloth*ed* was
[gaude grene='green dye.'
With bowe in honde and arw*es* in a cas.'
1221-2.

'Somme woln ben arm*e*d on hir legg*es* weel, [well]
And have an ax, and somme a mace of steel.'
1265-6.

(The same rhyme occurs again, ll. 1299-1300.)

'With Arcita in stories as men find*e*,
The grete Emetreus, the King of Inde . . .'
1297-8.

'An hundred lord*es* hadde he with him there,
Al arm*e*d, sauf hir heddes in al hir gere' [gear].
1321-2.

'But mercy, lady bright, that knowest weel
My thought, and seest what harm*es* that I feel.'
1373-4.

'Th' encéns, the cloth*es*, and the remenent al
That to the sacrifyce longen shal.'
1419-20.

Earlier Views on Chaucer's Metre.—The fact that such words as 'harm*es*,' 'cloth*es*,' etc., were pronounced with two syllables in the fourteenth century was not generally realized until the ap-

pearance of the essay on Chaucer's Language and Metre by Thomas Tyrwhitt, which was published in 1775 in the four-volume edition of the *Canterbury Tales* from the hand of this editor. Previously to Tyrwhitt's discovery, Johnson, in the *Rambler* (No. 88, 1785) had hinted at the probability that our ancestors pronounced certain syllables which we no longer pronounce, but his remarks do not refer specially to Chaucer. The first critic who really pointed out the difference of accent and in the number of syllables of the older forms of English as compared with the modern was Gray the poet, who arrived quite independently at the truth, and embodied it in his two essays, *On English Metre* and *On the Poems of Lydgate.* These essays were written long before the appearance of Tyrwhitt's edition, but were not published until 1814, in the so-called Eton Edition of Mathias. Tyrwhitt's discovery is therefore perfectly independent and original. With that just insight which informs all Gray's critical work, he remarks (Mathias's Edition, p. 31, vol. ii.): 'I am inclined to think (whatever Mr. Dryden says in the preface to his tales) that their metre, at least in serious measures and in heroick stanzas, was uniform; not indeed to the eye, but to the ear, *when rightly pronounced.* We undoubtedly destroy a great part of the musick of their versification by laying the accent of words where nobody *then* laid it' (*cf.* also other remarks on this point on this and following pages of the Essay on Lydgate). The loss of inflexional syllables, in genitives, plurals, infinitives, etc., is discussed with great acuteness and learning at the beginning of the *Essay on Metre.*

The mention of Dryden in the passage quoted recalls the fact that he and many other poets of the seventeenth century were in the habit of referring in terms of patronizing toleration of Chaucer's verse, as being a barbarous product of a rude age. Thus, Dryden, in the Preface to the Fables, to which Gray is referring, says: 'Though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer.' Again: 'The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us, . . . they who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it musical; . . . there is the rude music of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect.' Again: 'Chaucer, I confess, is a rough diamond, and must first be polished ere he shines' (see Ker's *Essays of John Dryden*, vol. ii., pp. 258-9, 265). Thus could so great a poet and fine a critic as Dryden write of so musical a writer as Chaucer, owing to his failure to perceive what the genius and learning of Gray divined fifty years later.

Imperfect Rhymes in Use at the Present Day.— Such rhymes as 'brood—blood,' 'created—defeated,' 'removed—beloved,' 'bound—wound,' 'great—cheat,' which we have noted as occurring in Shakespeare and Pope, are sometimes used by poets of the present day. They are not *good* rhymes, so far as the sound goes, but they are tolerated. What is the reason of this? There is no doubt that one reason why such rhymes are used is that the pairs, although differently pronounced, are *spelt* alike, and many people are satisfied with what is called an 'eye-rhyme.' There are those even who would assert that words which are *not* spelt in the same way

ought not to be associated in rhyme, even if the sound of both is identical. Thus 'gnawed—cord,' which probably all speakers of Standard English pronounce so as to rhyme absolutely, would be denounced as a 'bad rhyme,' because the same sound is spelt *-or-* in one case, and *-aw-* in the other. This is not a good argument, for rhyme is a question of sound, and not of spelling. The difference in spelling in 'cord—gnawed,' of course, shows that at one time these words were not pronounced alike; indeed, provincial and old-fashioned speakers still make a difference between them, but the majority of speakers of Standard English at the present day do pronounce them alike, and for them, therefore, the words constitute a perfect rhyme.

It is a strange thing that 'love—prove,' which have quite different vowel sounds, should yet be considered a good rhyme, merely because they are written with the same symbols.

But it is probable that rhymes of this class have come to be regarded as 'good,' not solely on account of the spelling, but because, as a matter of fact, such words formerly were pronounced alike, and were employed as rhymes, as we have seen, in the works of great poets several centuries ago. Thus, these rhymes have become traditional; they are still used by good poets, because it has been an unbroken custom to do so from the days in which the words really did rhyme; and now people who know nothing of the history of such rhymes are satisfied with them, because they are accustomed to find them in the works of poets, and also because of the identity of spelling in that part of each word which is supposed to rhyme with the other.

Rhyme and Spelling.—We may assume that the earlier poets cared nothing about spelling in connexion with rhyme. Spelling, down to the introduction of printing, was exceedingly variable, and remained so for centuries after, though to a less extent. The essential element of Rhyme, as poets in all ages feel, is *sound*. Now, it is a curious thing that in the sixteenth century identity of spelling was regarded by some as essential to a good rhyme, side by side, of course, with identity of sound, for there is no evidence that at this time words were rhymed together *apart* from their sound, and merely on the ground of spelling. Puttenham, who wrote an elaborate *Arte of English Poesie* in 1589, seems to think that unless words are spelt alike they cannot rhyme, and apparently believes that by altering the spelling of one, so as to make them alike in this respect, a good rhyme is thereby obtained. He does not approve of altering spelling (though his own seems to vary without any particular principle), but still thinks that, 'if by necessitie constrained, it is somewhat more tollerable to help the rime by false orthographie, then (=than) to leave an unpleasant dissonance to the eare, by keeping trewe orthographie and loosing the rime' (see *Arte of Poesie*, pp. 94-5. Arber's Edition, Constable, 1895).

It is interesting to note that Edmund Spenser writes *despight* to rhyme with *fight*, *spright* to rhyme with *night*, *delight*, and even *quight* (quite), to rhyme with *light*, and so on. Now, in Spenser's day all these words rhymed perfectly well, for *fight*, *might*, *light*, which originally contained a sound like that in

German '*gesicht*' after the *i*, had lost this sound, although the spelling *-gh-*, which originally expressed it, was retained, as it still is to the present day. The other words, *delight*, *spright*, *quight*, never contained this sound, and were never spelt in this way at an earlier period. Spenser has apparently introduced the *-gh-* purely for the sake of the eye. We have retained the *-gh-* in *delight* (delite in Chaucer), and *spright* is sometimes so written instead of the more historically correct *sprite*, but we never write *quight*.

In Chaucer's day such pairs as those cited above could not have been rhymed together, because *-gh-* was still pronounced in *fight*, etc. But by the time of Spenser, this sound, as has been said, no longer existing, the pairs were thoroughly good rhymes. Anyone who turns over the pages of the *Faerie Queene* will find plenty of examples of such alterations of the spelling, to make good rhymes on paper, of words that were already good rhymes to the ear.

3. Comparison of Other Dialects and Languages. —The third source of light upon the English sounds of past ages is the pronunciation of corresponding words in the various English dialects of the present day, and in other languages closely related to English, both in the present and their earlier stages.

To take the point we have just been considering, of the pronunciation of *-gh-* in '*sight*,' '*light*,' etc., when we find that all the old Germanic languages, including Old English, write *-ht-* in these words, that at the present day German, Dutch, etc., pronounce what is popularly known as a 'guttural' in them, and that the same is true of the Modern

Scotch Dialect, we can have little doubt (1) that these letters do express a sound which once existed, but which has now disappeared in Modern English, and (2) that the sound must have been approximately either the sound now heard in these words (*sight*, *light*, etc.) in Scotch and Dutch, or that heard in German at the present time. Again, when we find that Chaucer never rhymes words which are spelt with *-gh-* with those spelt without it, but that Spenser does make such rhymes, as we have seen above, then we may further conclude that the sound still existed in the pronunciation of Chaucer, but had been lost by Spenser's day.

4. Direct Statements of Contemporary Writers.—From the year 1530 onwards there has been a series of writers who have dealt with considerable accuracy and minuteness with the pronunciation of English at the time at which they wrote. Even earlier, in 1500 or thereabouts, an English *Hymn to the Virgin* was put into Welsh spelling, so as to express the English pronunciation for Welsh readers. This work, together with an account of English pronunciation written by Salesbury, a Welshman, in 1547, with a comparison between it and Welsh, and a tract on Welsh pronunciation by the same writer, in 1567, which shows that the sounds of Welsh were nearly the same then as now, is a most valuable foundation to start from, and is of the greatest service in understanding the descriptions given by other authorities. The usual method followed by the sixteenth and seventeenth century writers is to compare English sounds to those in other languages, many of which, such as Italian, we know have

undergone very little change since these periods. Other writers, again, give a very clear account of the actual position of the tongue and lips during the pronunciation of each sound. This makes it doubly certain what sound is meant, and, taken with the other accounts, leaves very little doubt. The main changes in English pronunciation since 1500 have been in the vowel sounds, and these have been very considerable. But some consonantal changes have also taken place, such as the dropping of the 'guttural' in words like *sight*, *light*, etc., as mentioned above, and the dropping of initial *k* and *g* before *n*, as in *know* and *gnaw*. A single example of the kind of description by comparison with Welsh, which is of so much use, may be given. Speaking of the pronunciation of English *a*, Salesbury says: 'A in English is of the same sound as *a* in Welsh, as is evident in these words of English—*all*, aal; *pale*, paal; *sale*, sal.' Welsh *a* at the present time still has the pronunciation of French or Italian *a*. The doubling of *a* in *aal*, etc., is intended to indicate that the sound was long in these words. We have no doubt, therefore, that *ale* and *pale* were pronounced in the year 1547, with the same vowel as that in Modern English f*a*ther.

When once the pronunciation of the sixteenth century is established, there is comparatively little difficulty in working backwards therefrom to Chaucer (died 1400), and even further back, to the pronunciation of the oldest forms of English.

When all four sources of information now enumerated are applied to every case, and carefully weighed and checked one against the other, we arrive at a

very considerable degree of certainty regarding the pronunciation of English at different periods in the past.

Landmarks in the History of English.

There are certain great historical events which have so profound an influence upon men's lives, either by giving them new ideas, by changing their way of living, or by bringing them into contact with other races, that the language which they speak, and by which they utter their thoughts and feelings, is itself influenced in various ways. We must enumerate as briefly as possible those external events in the history of our people which in one way or another have left a definite impress upon our language.

The Main Periods in the History of English.

We may divide the history of English into three great periods of growth: *Old English* (O.E.), which lasts from the landing of the English tribes in Britain until about 1100; *Middle English* (M.E.), from 1100 till about 1475; *Modern English* (Mod. Eng.), from 1475 until the present time.

Of course, these are not sharply marked periods: O.E. passes gradually into M.E., and this into Modern. In fact, it is usual to subdivide the above three great periods into *First Transition* (from O.E. to M.E.), 1100-1200; from 1200-1300 we speak of Early M.E.; and from 1300-1400 Late M.E. Then we have another Transition Period (from M.E. to Mod.), from 1400 (the year in which Chaucer died) to 1475 (the year in which Caxton began to print),

or to the end of the century. Again, we speak of *Tudor English* or *Early Modern*, from 1500-1650, or thereabouts.

1. The Old English Period.

The 'English' tribes, which included Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, began to settle and fight their way up the rivers and along the coasts from about the first half of the fifth century. They came from the North of Germany, from near the mouth of the Elbe, and they found in Britain a race superior to them in civilization, and in spiritual and intellectual development—a Celtic race who spoke a language some form of which was the ancestor of Modern Welsh. The English drove the Welsh more and more westwards, but they probably incorporated a good number among their own race; for from them the English acquired a large number of words, mostly, it is true, of Latin origin, and the Welsh also learned a fair number of words from English. This implies that the two races had some considerable and prolonged contact with each other. But the English renamed practically the whole country in which they lived, all except the extreme West—Cornwall and Devonshire, and what we still call Wales.

Dialects of Old English.—All these tribes spoke the same language, with more or less slight dialectal differences. The Angles divided into the Northumbrians and the Mercians, the former of which occupied the North, down to the Humber; the latter the Midlands, between the Humber and the Thames. The Saxons settled all the South, except the Isle of

Wight, part of Hampshire, and Kent, which were peopled by the Jutes.

There were thus four chief dialectal types of O.E.—*Northumbrian*, *Mercian* (which, although presenting certain differences, are often grouped together as *Anglian*), *Saxon*, and *Kentish*.

These dialects were each at different times in the ascendant, according as the group which spoke it were politically important; but from the ninth century onwards the West Saxon government and the West Saxon dialect won and maintained supremacy over the others. This was chiefly due to the genius of King Alfred.

The Mission of St. Augustine.—St. Augustine, afterwards the first Archbishop of Canterbury, came to England during the closing years of the sixth century, and was allowed by King Ethelbert of Kent to live in Canterbury and preach Christianity. Ethelbert himself embraced the new religion, and most of his people. From Kent Christianity spread, until, in less than a hundred years after the coming of Augustine and his monks, the whole of England was Christian. It need hardly be said that the Welsh or British Inhabitants of these Islands were, for the most part, Christians before the coming of the English.

The Coming of the Danes.—In the year 787 piratical rovers from Scandinavia first visited England, and for more than a hundred years continued to make onslaughts, for the sake of pillage, upon various parts of the coast. Later on, they landed considerable forces, and overran the country. For instance, in 840 thirty-five shiploads of Danes landed in Dorset; in 851 three hundred and fifty ships came up

the Thames; and, apparently for the first time, the heathen wintered in England that year. From this time onwards King Ethelwulf of Wessex, and his sons after him, were continually fighting the Danes, until the youngest, Alfred the Great, finally reduced them to submission in 878. The southern part of Northumbria and Mercia had already been invaded and settled by Norsemen; and after Alfred's victory over that part of the host which had invaded Wessex, this section accepted Christianity and settled in East Anglia. In the course of time those Danes who remained in England became absorbed into the English population and acquired the English language, whose vocabulary, however, they influenced to a considerable extent (*cf.* pp. 158 and 165-6).

More than a hundred years later a fresh army, led by the terrible Svein, again invaded this country and plunged it into bloodshed. Our miserable King, Ethelred, after vainly trying to purchase peace with gold, fled to Normandy in 1013. He returned, however, the following year, on the sudden death of Svein, and endeavoured to win back the country. Ethelred himself died in 1016, and was succeeded by his son Edmund Ironside, a man of a very different stamp. Cnut, the son of Svein, had been elected King by the Danes, and after many battles with Edmund, it was agreed that they should divide the country between them. Edmund died, however, within a year, and Cnut became sole King of England. Henceforward, until the death of Harthacnut in 1042, England was ruled by Danish Kings.

Norman Influence.—After the death of Cnut's son men wanted to be ruled once more by Kings of

their own blood, and the pious Edward, known as Confessor, the son of Ethelred, was called back to England from Normandy, where he had lived from childhood. Edward was half a Norman, for his mother was Emma, known in England as Ælfgifu, the daughter of the Norman Duke. With the reign of Edward Norman influence began, for he was far nearer to his mother's people than to the English in feeling, and filled his Court with Normans.

2. Transition and Middle English Period.

The invasion of England by the Normans resulted in fundamental changes in the social and political life of the people. No series of events has ever had so profound an effect upon our language as those which followed the coming of Duke William and his followers. The Normans, originally of the same race, known to the English as 'Danes,' who so long wrought havoc in this country under the Anglo-Saxon Kings, had settled in that part of France known as Neustria, under their leader Rolf, in 921. They appear rapidly to have assimilated the language, customs, and methods of government of the people among whom they settled. At any rate, the Conqueror and his Knights were thoroughly French, and spoke a northern dialect of French as their native tongue. The immediate results of the Norman Conquest were that government passed out of the hands of Englishmen into those of Normans—Norman Bishops filled English sees, and Norman Barons and Knights became the principal owners of land in England. Thus broadly speaking, we may say that the landowning and official classes were chiefly Norman in

blood, and therefore, at first, in language also. But Englishmen naturally clung to their own speech, and even continued to produce literary works in it. The rapid change which is observable in the style and grammar of the English language pretty soon after *the Conquest is probably only indirectly* due to this. We must remember that the written language is always more old-fashioned than the spoken language, so long as there is a continued literary tradition. Old English probably continued to be *written*, rather better than it had been in the days of Alfred, long after the spoken language had changed considerably in inflexions and in structure. But we may suppose that the literary tradition died out after the Conquest with the passing of the older generation, so that when the men of, say, 1100-1150 wrote, instead of following the old *literary* convention, they wrote much more as they *spoke*, and as their people, indeed, had *spoken* for a long time. As we shall see later, in spite of the loss of elegance (though not of expressiveness) and the dropping of many inflexions which characterized Old English proper, the introduction of Norman French words into English writings was rather a slow process (*cf.* pp. 166, etc. below).

Norman French, then, and English continued to be spoken for a long time side by side, and the former became more and more the official language for the Court, the Law, and the Government generally

There was no attempt to put down or discountenance the speaking of English. The Laws of William the Conqueror in Norman French contain many English law terms, and in his day writs were issued in English. There is no evidence that William or

his sons knew any English themselves, but it is pretty certain that Henry II. could at least understand it when he heard it. Gradually the racial distinctions of Englishman and Norman faded; they were both Englishmen by the beginning of the fourteenth century. Men of Norman origin spoke English quite naturally, as well as French, and the English also learned the latter language. Latin was used in charters and other documents more frequently than French in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

French was spoken in the Law Courts and in Parliament down to 1362, and in the schools until 1385, when, says a writer of the period, 'children leave off French and construe and learn in English.' However, for 300 years Norman French had a life of its own in England, and thus underwent development distinct from that followed by the Continental form. The influence which this language exerted upon English was a direct and living influence, and that influence ceases when the language ceases to be spoken. We may take it that it was dead before the year 1400.

Other direct linguistic influences of the M.E. period are Central French. English alone remained, deeply penetrated with Norman French words, a dialect different in many respects from Norman French, which came in through royal marriages and from the frequent presence of Englishmen in France on warlike expeditions, and some slight Italian and Arabic influence derived from the Crusaders. Of indirect influences, Latin must be mentioned as having at all times been a more or less fruitful source of enrichment for our vocabulary.

The Dialects of M.E.—The four main types which we noted as existing in O.E. are represented in M.E., and the diversity seems to be intensified. Almost every author, even in the same province, differs more or less from almost every other. The reason for the apparent increase of dialectal variety in the M.E. period may be partly due to the lack of a more or less fixed tradition of spelling, such as existed in late O.E., and which doubtless covered up many existing differences. The curious thing is that the peculiarities of the Modern English dialects can only be traced to M.E. types in very few cases, and, apart from the mixture of dialect elements which exists in the *Standard Language*, and which can be to some extent disentangled, and from such well-marked features as occur in the Northern English and Scotch dialects, it seems as if the M.E. Regional Dialects had been, as it were, melted down to a widespread uniform type, which developed anew fresh local varieties in the Modern period. For instance, the Kentish dialect is one of the most clearly marked and characteristic types down to the fourteenth century. But the modern dialect of Kent has preserved not a single distinguishing feature of Middle Kentish, except such as were incorporated into Standard English, and which have remained there to this day.

3. The Modern Period

The Rise of Standard English.

Out of the variety of the M.E. dialects there emerges, at the beginning of the Modern Period, or just before it, a form of English which is destined to

have a wonderful history, for it becomes, first, the form in which all English literature in future is written, and, secondly, the main spoken form throughout the country.

The questions to be answered with regard to this form of English are: (1) What are its characteristic dialectal features? (2) Where did it arise? (3) How did it obtain its widespread currency and prestige?

We may briefly answer these questions in the above order:

1. **Dialectal Features of Standard English.**—If we compare Standard Spoken English of to-day, or the recognized written form of English, with the various dialects of, let us say, the thirteenth century, we find that they resemble most closely the East Midland type of Middle English—that is, that in the main Modern Standard English is what thirteenth-century East Midland might have been expected to develop into. But we find also that Modern English contains certain features peculiar to the thirteenth-century dialect of Kent; others, though not many, which resemble more closely the Saxon type of speech (*cf. e.g.* pp. 135 and 180) of the same period, and a few peculiarities which seem to belong to the North. It is clear that Standard English is not the representative of any single, pure, Regional M.E. type, but is a mixture of several. It appears that the language of Chaucer (fourteenth century), itself a mixed type, is a form of English which may be regarded as being to a great extent, though not completely, the ancestor of Modern Standard English. Chaucer's English contains more purely *Southern*, or *Saxon*, features than ours does.

2. **The Place of Origin of Standard English.**—Chaucer's English is, in the main, the English of London, more particularly that of the Court of his day. There are many other documents, public and private, written in London about the same time, which have been preserved. There are documents written in London which go back a century earlier than Chaucer. The dialect of these documents is also of a mixed dialect type, only the Southern elements are stronger the further we go back. It appears, then, that London legal documents between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, the works of Chaucer, and Modern Standard English, are all characterized by a mixture of dialect; that the mixture in each case is very much the same, except that as time goes on *the purely Southern elements become less numerous*, their place being taken by Midland elements.

Other writings—*e.g.*, those of Wycliffe, which emanated from Oxford about the same time as those of Chaucer were being produced—also show a blend of Midland and Southern elements. It is believed that from these two great types of speech—that of London, the centre of Law, Government, and Commerce, and that of Oxford, the centre of learning and culture—the Standard English which we all write, and which we all try, at any rate, to speak, has grown up. It is not surprising that in Oxford, the meeting-place of scholars, and in London, the home of Government, the seat of the Court, the mart of the kingdom, forms of speech should arise which were not the original Regional Dialects of the two centres, but which included features of all the chief dialect types. Again, the geographical position of London

exposes it to the direct linguistic contact of the South, of Kent, and of the Midlands. The problem which confronts us, in considering the origin of Present-day English, is to determine the sources of its various dialectal elements. As for the modern provincial dialects, in the comparatively few cases where these differ considerably from the Standard Language, we shall be disappointed if we expect to find that they preserve some characteristic feature of this or that M.E. Regional Dialect. In the vast majority of cases, the differences of the modern dialects appear to have arisen, during the Modern Period, out of divergences from a form of English almost identical with that from which Standard English has sprung.

3. The Spread of the Standard Dialect.—During the fifteenth century the London type was gradually spreading as the language of legal documents, wills, etc., throughout all parts of England, so that speakers of all dialects, provided they could read, were made more or less familiar with it. Again, the works of Chaucer were widely read, and found many imitators. This only shows that there was a growing tendency to adopt a uniform mode of *writing* English. There is no reason for supposing that men tried to *speak* as they wrote; on the contrary, there is good evidence that provincial varieties of *speech* still flourished. Already in the fourteenth century that form of Northern English spoken in Scotland had attained a sufficient degree of individuality to be regarded as a separate group of dialects—Scots, as contrasted with English. Scotland, therefore, henceforth develops a literary language of its own, quite independent of England.

In the third quarter of the fifteenth century the introduction of printing gave a still further and wider currency to the London dialect; for all books *were printed in it, and henceforth no English writer* used the dialect of his province for literary purposes, but acquired, if he did not already possess it, that form of English in which the business of the realm was conducted—the form, or nearly so, in which Chaucer had written, and which the labours of Caxton made accessible to all.

The *translation of the Bible* by Tyndale (1525-1531), and, a little later, the *Prayer Book*, must be counted among the works which, universally known, up and down the country, must have contributed to spread the knowledge of the literary form.

But the same form of English which became the vehicle of literature came also to be regarded as the best and most 'correct' form of *Spoken* English. At the present time, some variety of this dialect is almost universal among all educated people. It was originally, no doubt, a *Class* dialect, primarily that of the Court. It is now spoken by all classes who have received any education.

Of course, there are well-marked varieties of Standard English, which, as we have seen, differ chiefly in pronunciation. This is natural in the case of a dialect which is so widely spread. Each class and each province into which it penetrates modify the language in a characteristic way. Still, it is a fact that both Regional and Class Dialects are giving way before the encroaching Standard English. The reasons for this, at the present time, are not far to seek. The main factor in obliterating Regional

exposes it to the direct linguistic contact of the South, of Kent, and of the Midlands. The problem which confronts us, in considering the origin of Present-day English, is to determine the sources of its various dialectal elements. As for the modern provincial dialects, in the comparatively few cases where these differ considerably from the Standard Language, we shall be disappointed if we expect to find that they preserve some characteristic feature of this or that M.E. Regional Dialect. In the vast majority of cases, the differences of the modern dialects appear to have arisen, during the Modern Period, out of divergences from a form of English almost identical with that from which Standard English has sprung.

3. The Spread of the Standard Dialect.—During the fifteenth century the London type was gradually spreading as the language of legal documents, wills, etc., throughout all parts of England, so that speakers of all dialects, provided they could read, were made more or less familiar with it. Again, the works of Chaucer were widely read, and found many imitators. This only shows that there was a growing tendency to adopt a uniform mode of *writing* English. There is no reason for supposing that men tried to *speak* as they wrote; on the contrary, there is good evidence that provincial varieties of *speech* still flourished. Already in the fourteenth century that form of Northern English spoken in Scotland had attained a sufficient degree of individuality to be regarded as a separate group of dialects—Scots, as contrasted with English. Scotland, therefore, henceforth develops a literary language of its own, quite independent of England.

In the third quarter of the fifteenth century the introduction of printing gave a still further and wider currency to the London dialect; for all books were printed in it, and henceforth no English writer used the dialect of his province for literary purposes, but acquired, if he did not already possess it, that form of English in which the business of the realm was conducted—the form, or nearly so, in which Chaucer had written, and which the labours of Caxton made accessible to all.

The *translation of the Bible* by Tyndale (1525-1531), and, a little later, the *Prayer Book*, must be counted among the works which, universally known, up and down the country, must have contributed to spread the knowledge of the literary form.

But the same form of English which became the vehicle of literature came also to be regarded as the best and most 'correct' form of *Spoken* English. At the present time, some variety of this dialect is almost universal among all educated people. It was originally, no doubt, a *Class* dialect, primarily that of the Court. It is now spoken by all classes who have received any education.

Of course, there are well-marked varieties of Standard English, which, as we have seen, differ chiefly in pronunciation. This is natural in the case of a dialect which is so widely spread. Each class and each province into which it penetrates modify the language in a characteristic way. Still, it is a fact that both Regional and Class Dialects are giving way before the encroaching Standard English. The reasons for this, at the present time, are not far to seek. The main factor in obliterating Regional

Dialects is our system of Primary Education, which places, in schools all over the country, teachers, trained according to a uniform scheme, whose own pronunciation and general way of speech has been carefully supervised in Pupil Teachers' Colleges or Training Colleges. Another important class of speech missionaries are the Clergy of the Church of England; and last, but by no means least in importance as an agent in smoothing out the most marked local peculiarities of dialect, is the wonderful increase of facilities in locomotion, which enables the population to move about freely, and to visit easily districts comparatively far removed from their place of abode. A uniform *literary language* is spread, by means of the Printing Press, quickly and thoroughly; uniformity of *uttered speech* is attained far slower, with much more difficulty, and, when reached, is certain to be broken up again by new tendencies of variation.

The M.E. dialects must have been considerably weakened in their individuality by such a mingling of the population from different provinces as would take place in the fifteenth century, during the *Wars of the Roses*; or in the seventeenth through the war between King Charles and his Parliament.

It is perhaps necessary to point out that the spread of a certain uniformity of speech throughout a considerable portion of the country is in no case the result of a tendency of different dialects to converge towards the same form, or, in other words, to *grow like each other*. On the contrary, it always means that one type of speech is being *acquired* over a large area by persons who are, by that very process, *giving up* their former type of dialect.

The Revival of Learning.

With the closing years of the fifteenth century, what was known as the New Learning spread to England from Italy. With the introduction of Greek into Oxford and Cambridge, a new era began in Religion, Philosophy, Art, and Letters. The new ideas and aspirations thus awakened in men's minds demanded an expression which could best be found in those classical languages which enshrined the culture that was now fermenting afresh, and with new power, in England. Hence, Greek and Latin elements filter into our language in the Tudor period, not only because they were necessary to the new needs, but also because these languages were so zealously cultivated, that scholars borrowed, perhaps sometimes unconsciously, from them, when plain English would have sufficed quite well. This influence lasted for a long time—in fact, it lingers on still—and the English style of such writers as Bacon or Sir Thomas Browne is stiff with Latin words that have never been naturalized.

During the sixteenth century, not only was the interest in classical learning revived, but the modern languages and literatures of Italy and Spain were known and studied by many Englishmen. Travel in Italy was fashionable, and political events brought England and Englishmen into close touch with Spaniards. French was now, as always, known by the upper classes.

While scholars, statesmen, and men of letters were enriching the fund of national ideas from rediscovered worlds of thought, men of action—navi-

gators, fighters, and settlers—were discovering new worlds beyond the sea, and bringing home wonderful tales of 'feathered peoples,' countries 'roofed with gold,' as well as new and delicious fruits, and herbs and spices with strange and outlandish names. By no means without their importance for the English language were the adventurous voyages of Raleigh, Drake, and Frobisher.

The characteristic of the Modern Period of English history has been Colonial expansion in every quarter of the globe. The effect of this has been to bring us into contact not only with new ideas of Society, Religion, and Government, but also with an extraordinary variety of races and languages, most of which have added something to our vocabulary—the names of animals, products, or institutions.

CHAPTER IX

ENGLISH SOUND CHANGES OF THE PAST

Now that we have seen what are the principal ways in which we ascertain the nature of the sounds used in earlier periods of our language, and have further distinguished the chief periods of development into which English may conveniently be divided, we may proceed to note some of the most important sound changes which have occurred during its past history.

We saw, in an earlier chapter of this book (pp. 71-81), that at the present time certain sound changes, both of an *Isolative* and of a *Combinative* character, are actually in progress in our own pronunciation, and throughout its whole history the English language has been subject to tendencies of change of either class. What we can now observe in contemporary English speech is nothing new, it has always been so: English is changing now, as it changed in the Past, and as it will continue to change in the Future.

The account, description, or statement of a change of sound which takes place at a given period in the history of a language is called a *Sound Law*, or a Law of *Sound Change*.

A knowledge of the *Sound Laws* of a language is

one very vital element in the study of its history. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that in considering the development of English, or of any other language, we must pay the strictest regard to the facts of sound change. A guiding principle of philological method is that **Sound Laws admit of no exceptions.** This axiom means that when we have discovered, from the evidence of a sufficient number of examples, that in a given dialect, at a given time, a certain sound, under certain conditions, tends to change in a particular direction, we are not justified in assuming that this is not *invariably* the case. It will not do to suppose that in the same dialect, at the same time, there can be two different tendencies at work upon the same sound. If we find what appear to be exceptions to Sound Laws, it means either that our Sound Law has been imperfectly stated, that we have not reckoned with all the conditions, that the supposed 'exception' is borrowed from another dialect, or, lastly, that the principle known as *Analogy* has been at work in this particular case, and that the sound in the word in question is not the result of ordinary sound change at all, but owes its form to association with some other word or group of words.

A disregard for these strict scientific methods of dealing with the history of language has produced in the past much misleading statement, and vitiates a great deal of the amateur etymology-making, which is still not infrequent.

It may be as well to state here, that at the present time there are in England, Germany, and Scandinavia, a large number of scholars engaged in investigating

in great detail the development of English sounds in all ages and in all dialects. The aim of the Science of Historical Linguistics, as applied to English, is, amongst other things, to discover all the sound changes which have taken place in English, in all its dialects, from the earliest period up to the present day.

In a little book for beginners, like the present, only a few of the results of the labour of all these workers can be laid before the student.

English, as it now exists, is the outcome of hundreds of years of development, and some of those sound changes which took place in past ages, and whose traces are still discernible in our own speech, may with advantage be stated as briefly as possible. The simple but important principle to be borne in mind is, that if two closely related words show [illegible] what it was, and why it happened.

Combinative Changes which occurred in the Old English Period.

(*a*) **Changes in the Nature of Vowels.**—On pp. 82, 83 above (2, *a*) there is a list of pairs of words in Modern English which have quite different vowel sounds, although closely related, and in some cases being merely the Singular and Plural forms respectively of the same word. Nothing that we know of, or can learn from, Modern English will explain the reason for the different vowels in *mouse* and *mice*,

etc. Indeed, in the oldest written documents which we possess (seventh century) in English the difference in this or in similarly related pairs of words is already defined. Thus, O.E. has *mūs*, 'mouse,' in the Singular and *mȳs* in the Plural; *fōt*, 'foot'; *fēt*, 'feet,' and so on. By comparison with other languages, however, we are able to assert positively that the Plural was originally *mūsi*, *fōti*, with *ū* and *ō* respectively in the Plural as in the Singular. In fact, we are able to state the law as follows: When, in Primitive O.E., the vowel *-i-* (pronounced like '*ee*') or the consonant sound *j* (pronounced like English *y* in *you*) follow *ū*, *ō*, in the same word, these vowels become respectively *ȳ* (pronounced like French *u* in '*lune*') and *ē* (pronounced like French *é*). This process is called *Mutation*; it probably took place in England in the sixth century. The nature of the change is a very simple one. All the vowels which underwent it (with one exception) were *back* vowels (*i.e.*, pronounced with the back of the tongue), and the result of the process was that they were replaced by vowels pronounced with the *front* of the tongue. The reason for this change was that the sounds *-i-* and *-j-* (described above) were *front* sounds, and had the effect of making the vowels which preceded them in a word into front vowels, and therefore more like themselves. When once *mȳs*, *fēt*, were developed, they remained for ever distinct from the singular forms, and developed later on into *mice*, *feet*, just as the singulars developed into *mouse*, *foot*. All the vowel differences in the pairs in the list on p. 82 (*a*. 2.) were produced originally in this way. The verb *fill* (O.E. *fȳllan*) was derived from the adjective *full*,

because the suffix of the verb was formerly *-jan*. *Borough* is from an old nominative *burg* or *burug*, while *Bury* is from the dative of the same word—O.E. *byrig*.

It is interesting to note that the celebrated Saxon King Hengist lived and died long before the period of mutation, and that his own name had not yet received the form familiar to later generations during his lifetime. He knew himself as *Hangist*.

In all cases in the list, the words which contain front vowels (Mod. Eng. *i*, *ea*, *e*, *ee*, etc.), or the so-called 'long *i*'—that is, the diphthong *ai*; *cf.* p. 35 (*e*)—are derived from the form found in those cognates which contain back vowels, and the front vowels are due to the existence at an early period of a suffix with *-i* or *-j*.

(*b*) **Changes in Consonants** (see *b*, p. 82 above).—(1) Such differences as the *k*-sound in *cock* compared with the '*ch*-sound' of *chicken* are due to the fact that in O.E. *k* was retained before back vowels such as *o*, but was 'fronted'—that is, shifted to a sound very like the present '*ch*-sound'—before front vowels. Thus, we have in O.E. *cocc* (with *k*-sound), but *ċīċen*, where the initial *ċ* was pronounced almost like '*ch*' before the vowel *ī*. These represent two different forms of the same 'root,' the vowel difference here being far older than the O.E. period, as we shall see later on (p. 197). When *c* occurred in the middle of a word in O.E., it remained as a *k*-sound before back vowels and some consonants, but became '*ch*' before *-i-* or *-j-*; thus, we have *drink*, O.E. (Infinitive) *drincan*, but *drench*, from Primitive O.E. *dranki*. Similarly, both consonants in *cook*, O.E. *cōc*, are *k*-sounds, but in

kitchen, early O.E. *cycine*, the '-*ch*-sound' developed in the middle of the word.

A similar explanation accounts for the difference in the final sounds of *hang* and *hinge*. The latter had a -*j*- suffix.

(2) *Differences of Voice and Breath.*—The sounds *s*, *f*, and *th* seem to have been voiceless in O.E. when final, but to have been voiced between vowels. Hence, '*to breathe*' (with voiced *th*), from O.E. *brǣþan* (þ=*th*), but *breath*, from *brǣþ*; *wife*, O.E. *wif* (voiceless *f*), but in the oblique cases of O.E. *wife*, dative singular, *wifum*, dative plural, etc., the *f* was pronounced as *v*. Strange to say, we still express this difference in our spelling, preserving thus a Middle English spelling with *v*. The change of *s*—*r*, as in *was*—*were*, etc. (*cf.* p. 83), represents an original change of *s*—*z*; but this took place long before the O.E. period, and was due to a difference in the position of the accent.

Changes which occurred during the Middle English Period.

Perhaps the most important combinative changes in M.E. which have left important traces in Present-day English were changes in the quantity of vowels. The resulting differences in the modern forms are not always recognizable as mere differences of quantity, so diverse was the subsequent development of the same vowel according to whether it was long or short in M.E.

(*a*) Shortening of O.E. Long Vowels.—Long

vowels were shortened in M.E. (1) before more than two consonants. Hence, while O.E. *cīld*, 'child,' retained its long vowel in M.E. (*-ld* being favourable to length in preceding vowel), the plural *cīldru* becomes *chĭldre*, and the short vowel undergoes no further change. The result is that we have *children*, and the dialectal *childer*. On the other hand, the long ī-sound of M.E. *chīld* becomes the diphthong of Mod. Eng. *child*. There is no difference in the spelling, but the sounds of singular and plural are very different.

(2) Most groups of two consonants have the faculty of shortening a preceding long vowel in M.E. A few examples of such shortenings are—*before two stops: kĕpte*, 'kept,' compared with *kēpen*, 'keep'; before stop + open consonants: *dĕpthe*, 'depth,' compared with *dēpe*, 'deep'; before open consonant + stop: O.E. *sōfte*, 'soft,' M.E. *sŏfte* (the Modern pronunciation with the '*aw*'-sound in this word is the result of a *recent* lengthening process); before open consonants and *l*. *gŏsling*, compared with *gōs*, 'goose.' Here the long ō of *gōs* has normally developed in Mod. Eng. *ū*, but the short ŏ has remained unchanged. Shortening took place, further, before *l* followed by an open consonant—M.E. *fĭlthe*, 'filth,' compared with M.E. verb *fīlen*, 'to defile.' Here the short ĭ has remained in *filth*, but the long ī of the verb has become the Mod. Eng. diphthong in '*de-file*.'

The application of the rules which these examples illustrate will explain the differences that exist in a large number of words of the same class as the pairs on p. 82 (*a*) above.

(*b*) Lengthening of O.E. Short Vowels.—The

become ō, and the result is that it then remained a short vowel with very little change until the Modern period. Thus, in the old compound *Stānlæh*, literally 'Stony field,' 'Stony lea,' the ā was shortened in early M.E., giving the form *Stănlei* [p. 133 (2)]; whence Present-day *Stanley*, instead of '*Stoneley*.' Such a name as Stoneleigh, which is found, is a new compound of the two independent words *stone* and *leigh*, and not the descendant of an old formation.

In the North of England and in Scotland O.E. ā did not become ō, but developed into a sound something like that in Mod. Eng. 'hat,' only long. This sound subsequently became ē (like French é), and this is the sound which we find in Mod. Scotch and the Northern dialects of England. The above words are popularly written *hame*, *stane*, *bane*, to express the Scotch pronunciation. The English *hale*, 'strong, healthy,' etc. ('hale and hearty'), is simply a Northern form of O.E. *hāl*, which in the South became *hōl* in M.E., and survives as *whole* in Present-day English, with a quite unnecessary *w* in the spelling. In the same way *road* is the Southern and *raid* the Northern form of O.E. *rād* (connected with 'to *ride*'). In this case the meaning is also different.

Principal Sound Changes since the M.E. Period.

These are chiefly isolative, and affect the long vowels. Of the short vowels, only two have undergone change.

(1) M.E. ā ('as in father') has become what is popularly called the 'long *a*-sound' (*cf.* p. 35

M.E. *nāme—name; gāte—gate; blāme—blame.* No change has taken place in spelling.

(2) M.E. ē (as in French é) has become '*ee*' (as in 'speed'). Here, again, no change has occurred in the spelling as a rule. Mod. Eng. *feet, greet, deem, sheet, he, cheese*, etc., are all of this origin.

Another sound in M.E., often written *e*, but also *ea*, which was different from the above and more like French ê in *tête*, has also developed in most dialects of English into the '*ee*'-sound. Words of this origin are generally spelt with *ea* in Mod. Eng. It will be observed that in the 'Irish Brogue' such words as *beat, heat, lead* (verb), etc., are usually pronounced with a sound like French é, while *he, bee, seed, heed*, etc., as often with the English pronunciation. This means that Irish English preserves an original distinction of sound, which lasted down to the seventeenth century in this country, but was then lost.

(3) M.E. ī (pronounced like Modern '*ee*') has been diphthongized to *ai* (the 'long *i*-sound'; *cf.* p. 35 (e), *ante*): *wīf—wife; līf—life; nīn—nine*, etc. No change in the spelling marks the change of sound.

(4) M.E. ō, which symbol expressed two distinct sounds, preserves the distinction in the modern language.

(*a*) M.E. ō = the sound in French *beau*, etc., has become ū (that is, the '*oo*'-sound, as in *moon*): M.E. *sōne—soon; cōl—cool; stōl—stool*, etc. Words like *book, hook, good*, and others spelt with *oo*, but pronounced—in the South of England, at any rate—with the ŭ-sound of 'put,' also had this ō originally, and developed ū, but underwent shortening com-

paratively recently (eighteenth century). In *goose* we have the result of this *ō*; in *gosling* it was shortened before it became *ū* (*cf.* pp. 133 (2) and 136 (4) above).

(*b*) The other M.E. *ō* which had the sound of Mod. Eng. '*aw*' has become what we now call 'long *o*,' but what is really a diphthong (*cf.* p. 34 (*b*), *ante*): M.E. *hōm—home; bōn—bone; thrōte—throat*, etc.

[N.B.—The student will note, in reading Chaucer, that this poet keeps the two *ē*'s and the two *ō*'s distinct in rhyming, and does not make one rhyme with the other.]

(5) M.E. *ū*, often written *ou* (*cf.* p. 142 (*b*, 1) below), has been diphthongized to *au* (*cf.* p. 34 (*a*) above): M.E. *cū* or *cou—cow; nū* or *nou—now; hūs* or *hous—house*, etc.

[*N.B.—The diphthongizing of M.E. ī and ū began in the sixteenth century.*]

(6) M.E. *ŭ*, and the long *ū* dealt with in No. 4 (*a*) above, which developed out of earlier *ō*, when shortened to *ŭ* shortly after the beginning of the sixteenth century, both underwent, in the seventeenth century, a change to a sound not unlike that in Present-day *cut, but*, into which it soon passed. Original M.E. *ŭ* is represented by this sound in Mod. Eng. *dull, sun, run, hunt*, etc.; also in *come, son*, etc. (For the spelling *o* in these words, *cf.* p. 146 (3) below.)

Sixteenth-century *ŭ* from *ū*, which in its turn had sprung from *ō*, has acquired the same sound as we find in *but*, in *blood, among, flood*, etc.

(7) M.E. *ă*, a sound like that in German '*mann*,' acquired in the seventeenth century what we now

call the 'short *a*-sound,' which is heard in *cat*, *bad*, *can*, *sat*, etc. The old sound still survives in provincial modes of speech, especially in the North Midlands and North of England.

Changes in the M.E. Diphthongs.

(1) M.E. *au* (pronounced like the diphthong in *house*) developed during the seventeenth century into a sound approaching the Mod. Eng. '*aw*'-sound. The spellings *au*, *aw*, are retained in words where the new sound now stands. The diphthong occurred in English words like *draw*, *saw*, *dawn*, *daughter*, *taught*, etc., and in French words such as *fault*, *cause*, *vaunt*, etc.

(2) M.E. *ai*, *ei* (pronounced like the Modern 'long *i*' sound), lost their diphthongal character during the seventeenth century, and developed subsequently on the same lines as M.E. *ā* (*cf.* pp. 135, 136). In common with this sound they have developed into the Mod. Eng. 'long *a*'-sound. These words still retain their diphthongal spelling, *ai*, or *ay*. Examples of English words are *rain*, *pail*, *way*, *day*, etc.; of French, *faith*, *gay*, *pay*, are examples.

These are some of the chief changes in the vowels of stressed or accented syllables which have taken place during and since the M.E. period.

Vowels of the Unaccented Syllables.

The vowels of inflexional syllables in O.E. *a*, *e*, *u*, were all levelled under *ĕ* in M.E., and towards the end of this period, probably by the middle of the fifteenth century, the unstressed *e* was dropped in pronunciation, although it has often remained to the

present day in the spelling. Examples of levelling under ĕ and subsequent loss of this are: O.E. *nămă*, M.E. *nāmĕ*, Mod. Eng. *name*; O.E. *sunu*, M.E. *sŭnĕ*, Mod. Eng. *son* (often written *sone* in Early Modern); O.E. *stānăs* (nom. and acc. pl.), M.E. *stōnĕs*, Mod. Eng. *stones* (='stōnz' in pronunciation).

In old compounds in which the second element was originally long, and stressed as strongly as the first element, this second element gradually lost its independent accent, and was then shortened. Thus, *Kingston*-on-Thames was originally *Kingĕs tūn*= 'the King's town'; then the strong stress was confined to the first word *Kinges*, and the vowel of *tūn* was shortened. This is the reason for the modern pronunciation of *Kingston*. Kingstown in Ireland, on the other hand, is a new name, created afresh out of the two separate words, *King's town*. In this name the second element is always pronounced quite clearly as *town*.

In concluding this chapter we may remark that it is often wrongly suggested that the changes which occurred in the passage of Old into Middle English, as they affect both pronunciation and the inflexional system, were largely due to the influence of the Normans. This is not the case, for there is every reason to believe that those changes, which are, for the most part, first expressed in the spelling during the M.E. period, were due to tendencies which began long before, as part of the natural development of English, and which would have been carried out just as completely if there had been no Norman Conquest. The influence of this event upon the vocabulary is an entirely different question, as will be shown in a later chapter.

CHAPTER X

ENGLISH SPELLING

THE spelling of Modern English is so full of curiosities and inconsistencies that a short account and explanation of the chief of these seems necessary.

The general fact that our spelling is so far behind our pronunciation results from the comparatively early fixing of the former—at the end of the fifteenth century, with the introduction of Printing—and the active tendencies of changes which have affected English pronunciation since that date. This early fossilization of the spelling accounts, too, for some of its inconsistencies, for words which once contained the same sounds have developed differently, while others which originally contained different sounds have now levelled these under one and the same sound.

But another reason why we often express the same sound in different ways, or, on the other hand, express several different sounds with the same symbol, is that our system of spelling is a mixture of a method inherited from O.E. and of one derived from Northern scribes. A third cause of the strange nature of some of our spellings is a deliberate attempt to make them reveal the etymology—that is, to throw light on the past history of the words.

A comparatively small residuum of words may be said to be phonetic in spelling, but this is the result of accident. Thus, such spellings as *not, hot, sin, din, lend, spend*, and the majority of short words which contain the short 'o,' 'i,' and 'e' sounds, do not owe their regularity of spelling to any design bestowed upon them, but not upon other words, but merely to the fact that these three vowel sounds have remained practically unchanged for hundreds of years.

Norman-French Influence.

(*a*) *Consonants*.

1. *c* written for *s*. This is found not only in words of Norm.-Fr. origin, such as *city, face, receive*, but also in a few English words, such as *mice*. In M.E., *c* is written oftener than at present to represent the sound of *s* in pure English words. Thus, we find *wice*, 'wise'; *cene*, 'seen'; *alce*, 'also,' etc.

2. *gu* for *g*. Since the English scribes used the latter symbol at one time to express several quite distinct sounds, French scribes found it convenient to distinguish the back-stop (as in '*good*') from the others by writing *gu* for it. We have not many survivals of this practice now, but *guess, guest, guild*, may be mentioned. *Tongue* may owe its spelling originally to this common habit, for we often find *kingue*, etc., in M.E.; but the retention of this spelling in the former word may be partly owing to the spelling *langue* of the French word for the same thing. In M.E. we not infrequently find 'good' written *guod*, etc.

3. *v* for *f*. This was a convenient French device to distinguish the voiced from the voiceless sound: O.E. wrote *f* for both.

4. *qu* for O.E. *cw*. This has become universal and was a natural habit to adopt from the moment that the symbol *c*, besides the association with the *k*-sound, which is still retained, was also associated with the sound of *s*. Examples are *quick*, O.E. *cwicu*; *queen*, O.E. *cwēn*; *quell*, O.E. *cwellan*, etc.

5. *j* (initially) for the '*dge*'-sound. This sound only occurs *initially* in M.E. in French words, and to this day there are no *English* words in Standard English which have the sound in this position. In fact, its occurrence initially is a sure test of Norman-French origin—*e.g.*, *judge*, *jest*, *joy*.

The word *jaw* appears to be from French *joue*, and the vowel sound in the Modern word, which, indeed, it would be difficult to derive from French *ou*, is perhaps influenced by that of M.E. *chawl*, from O.E. *ceafl*, 'jaw, muzzle.' The vowel sound of Mod. Eng. *jowl*, on the other hand, cannot be derived from that in O.E. *ċeafl*; both the vowel of the modern form, and the voicing of the initial consonants, can only be explained by confusion of the English word with the French *joue*.

(*b*) *French Vowel Spellings.*

1. *ou*, or *ow*, was the French symbol, as at present, for the *ū*-sound, the sound which we generally express by *oo* in Mod. Eng. This old vowel, as we have seen (see p. 137 (5) above), was diphthongized in the sixteenth century to something like its present sound. This fact accounts for the apparent

attempt at phonetic spelling of the diphthong in *house*, *mouse*, *cow*, etc.

2. The sound of Modern French *u* in *lune* existed in Norman French, and also in O.E. It was written *u* by French scribes, when short, in both French and English words where it existed. Since it only survived (in English words) in M.E. in the Southern or Saxon dialect, we have few, if any, words of English origin which contain the representative of this sound at the present day. It survives, however, in the spelling of the verb *bury*, although the Standard pronunciation here is that of the old Kentish dialect. In French words, however, the sound was very common, and was nearly always written *u* in M.E. The spelling survives in such words as *lute*, *nature*, *brute*, etc. When long, this sound was often written *ui*. This spelling survives in the French words *fruit*, *bruit*, *suit*, etc., and in the English *bruise*. The latter is the only case in Standard English where the old Southern sound is represented, and therefore the only one where the spelling survives in a Native English word.

Other Survivals of M.E. Spellings.

(*a*) *Consonants*.

1. The symbol *gh*. We may distinguish four cases of what we may call an improper use of *gh* in Mod. Eng.: (1) *bright*, *sigh*; (2) *sought*, *daughter*; (3) *plough*, *bough* (in neither of these cases does the symbol express any sound in our present pronunciation); (4) *rough*, *laugh*, etc., where it expresses the sound of *f*.

In (1) *gh* or *h* in M.E. expressed the sound now heard in German '*ich*,' '*I*,' etc. This sound was gradually weakened, until it was assimilated to the short *i*-sound, which it lengthened, and then it disappeared from speech. In (2) *gh* expressed the sound of *ch* in Scotch *loch*. This sound seems to have been the cause of the development of a diphthong with the preceding vowel, out of which sound the Mod. Eng. '*aw*'-sound has developed (see p. 138). In (4) the sound of Scotch *ch* in *loch* became, by a common M.E. change, the *f*-sound. In all these cases there was once a good reason for writing *gh*; there is none now, except custom. The words in (4) are very curious, for the spellings show that they represent the type which developed *f* in M.E., and yet the pronunciation is quite different. The fact is that there were in early M.E. two types of the word *plough*, etc., one derived from the Nominative, in which *gh* was final and voiceless, and ultimately became *f* in pronunciation, as in *rough*, *enough*, and as in the provincial Mod. Eng. '*pleuf*,' 'plough'; the other derived from the oblique cases (*plōghes*, etc.), where *gh* was voiced and normally developed into a *w*-sound, or assimilated with the preceding vowel to form a diphthong. This type is represented in our present pronunciation of *plough* and *bough*, and in the old form *enow* (compared with *enough*). The old spelling *plow* accurately expresses this M.E. type.

Therefore, in *plough* and *bough* we write one historical form and pronounce another.

2. The use of *c* and *k* for the same sound. If we examine the words which contain the *k*-sound

initially in Mod. Eng., we shall find that as a general rule there is a certain method in the employment of the two symbols to express it. We shall find that *k* is generally used in such words as *kith, kin, kind, keen, ken, kiss, king*, etc.; that is, in words where the vowel still is, or was in early M.E., a *front* vowel. On the other hand, we have *c* in *cot, cut, comb, cool, came*, etc.; that is, in words in which the following vowel is, or was in early M.E., a *back* vowel. The reason of this distinction is plain. The letter *c* in O.E. represented two sounds, a *back*, or *k*-sound, and a *front*, or very nearly a '*ch*'-sound. Now, the symbol *k* first came into general use in early M.E., and its use was perfectly regular and uniform; it stood only for one sound—that which we still associate with it. Before *back* vowels there could be no doubt that *c* always represented a *k*-sound in English words, and it was therefore retained in the spelling before these. On the other hand, *c* before front vowels was ambiguous; it represented the *k*-sound in some words, but the *ch*-sound in others. Again, in words of French origin it also stood for the sound of *s*, as we have seen. Under these circumstances, it was very convenient to use the symbol *k* in words like *kin*, etc., where the spelling *cin* might stand either for '*chin*' (if an English word), or for '*sin*' (if a French word).

3. Final *-e* as a sign of length. In M.E., as we have seen (pp. 133, 134), in words like *hōpĕ*, the vowel of the first syllable was always long. Then the *ĕ* disappeared in pronunciation, but was still often written, after the word was pronounced merely *hōp*. The 'silent' *e* thus was looked upon as an indication that

the preceding vowel was long, and was found to be a useful device to express this fact.

(*b*) *Vowel Spellings.*

1. Mod. Eng. *oo*, which now in most cases expresses the sound of ū (French *sou*, German *blume*, English *bloom*), is originally a doubling of the symbol to express a long vowel. In Early M.E. this was simply a long ō-sound (*cf.* p. 136 (4) above). This *oo*, originally the sign of the long close ō, has been retained, in spite of the complete change of sound. Hence English people have come to regard this as the natural means of expressing the ū-sound. A reference to pp. 136 (4) and 137 (6) will explain why we also write *oo* in *blood* and in *good*. The old 'close' ō, whether in words of English or French origin, was, and still is, written in this way. For English words, see above, *loc. cit.* *Fool* is an example of a French word with this spelling.

2. *ee* or *ie*, and *ea* were used to distinguish respectively the sound of close ē (French é), and of open ē (French ê). These sounds have now been levelled under a single sound, as in *believe*, *seed*, and *bead* respectively, but the difference in the spelling is still kept (*cf.* p. 136 (2) above). *ie* is used only for the close ē in M.E., and many words were spelt thus, especially by some writers of the fourteenth century, which are now written with *ee*.

3. *o* was written in words like *some*, *son*, *Monmouth*, *come*, etc., instead of ŭ in M.E. This was simply a graphic device, and implied no change of sound. Its purpose was distinctness, for *sum*, *cume*,

etc., in M.E. writing looked very like a confusion of strokes, *u*, *n*, and *m* being very much alike.

The history of M.E. *ŭ* has been discussed (p. 137 (6) above), and of course the development of the sound had nothing to do with the graphic expression of it. This habit of writing *o* instead of *u* explains the occurrence of the former letter to-day in several words which have the vowel sound of *but*. In M.E. the spelling was far commoner than now, for the *u* has been restored in a large number of words.

Attempts at Etymological Spelling.

In Norman French the words *debt* and *doubt* were spelt *dette*, *doute*, respectively, and they retained this spelling in English. At a later date a *b* was introduced into each, as if to show that they were derived from Latin *debitum*, *dubitum*. This belief is true to some extent, but the *b*-sound had been lost long before they were introduced from French into English. *Fault* and *false* were spelt *faut* and *fause* in M.E.; the *l* of popular Latin *fallitum*, *falsum*, had disappeared already in Norman French before the words passed into our language. Indeed, Pope still rhymes *fault—thought*, and no *l* is heard in Scotch pronunciation at the present day.

Island has a curious history as regards its spelling. It stands for O.E. *īgland*, M.E. *īland*, a compound, of which the first element *īg*, *ī*, itself means '*island*.' But the word was very early connected with French *île*, from Lat. *insula*. Now, the *s* was restored to the form *isle* in Continental French, from the same tendency to etymologize which led our forefathers to

write *debt*, etc. This spelling *īsle* then found its way into England, and the word *īland*, being regarded as really *īl-land*, was also endowed with an *s*.

Could, from M.E. *coude*, has absolutely no right to *l* in the middle from any point of view, since no such sound ever existed in this word. There is no doubt that the spelling is due to the pattern of *should* and *would*, where *l* was once pronounced—M.E. *shōldĕ, wōldĕ*.

gh in *ghost, ghastly*, may be the result of Italian literary influence in the Early Modern period; but is more probably due to the influence of Dutch spelling on the early printers; *cf.* earlier Dutch *gheest*.

Influence of Spelling on Pronunciation.

That the mode of writing a word, which is in English purely a survival of a bygone age, and often, as we have seen, not even a genuine record of an earlier pronunciation, should have any effect at all upon living, traditional utterance is remarkable, and a process which could only come about in an age when men cherished the written symbol with a kind of superstition, as enshrining some essential truth which should hold good for all time. The very worst way, as a rule, to form any idea of the pronunciation of an English word at the present time is to consider its spelling. Yet, strange to say, there are a few cases in which the natural course of development has been interrupted, as regards common usage, and a deliberate return has been made to a pronunciation suggested by the spelling. *Fault* and *false* are cases in point, and here, curiously enough, an altogether new sound, so far as these words in English are

concerned, is introduced. There is a considerable tendency among some classes at the present time to consider ordinary colloquial pronunciation as something 'corrupt' and 'vulgar,' something which needs correction. For instance, an initial *h* has been introduced into the pronunciation of *humble, herb, hospital*, words of Norman-French origin, where, as it seems likely, no aspirate has been pronounced for hundreds of years, although we have continued to write *h*. How long will it be before *h* is pronounced in *hour, honour, honest*, on the same principle? Again, *h* has been restored for more than a generation in 'neighbour*h*ood,' although *h* in such a position has normally long disappeared from pronunciation. *h* is now being restored by many of the rising generation in *forehead*, and a pronunciation 'faw *head*' is now common. When the present writer was a boy this pronunciation was an unpardonable vulgarism, only heard from semi-educated persons who were trying to 'speak fine.'

But the class of words most affected by 'spelling-pronunciation' are Place and Personal Names. Here the traditional pronunciation often cannot be guessed by those who know neither the people nor the places. The increase of railways opens up and connects all parts of the country, and names like *Uttoxeter, Cirencester*, the spelling of which is very old, seen in print for the first time by people who have never heard the names from natives, are certain to mislead. It constantly happens in such cases that the sham spelling-pronunciations given by porters and tourists gain ground in the neighbourhood itself. This is the case of Cirencester, many

of whose inhabitants, instead of 'sissiter' or 'sis-sister,' pronounce 'syrensester,' or even, for short, 'syren.' It is notori[illegible] that Oxford tradesmen always correct one's [illegible]tion of 'mawdlen' to 'magdalen' Colleg[illegible]

CHAPTER XI

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH VOCABULARY—LOAN-WORDS

WHEN we speak of the development of the vocabulary of a language, we have to consider not only the new words which pass into it from age to age, but also of the new significance which many old words acquire. But the history of the vocabulary of English, or indeed of any other language, is not a chronicle of pure gain. Words often fall out of common use; they may pass out of everyday speech into that of the higher forms of oratory; then they may linger on in occasional literary use, and finally disappear altogether. The place of these losses often has to be filled, and they may be replaced either by words which existed of old in the language, side by side with those which have vanished, or by entirely new words which come into the language from outside—that is, from some other language.

The best way to get a sound and clear idea of the nature of the English vocabulary is to take a piece of Old English of moderate length, say the New Testament, or of Middle English, say of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales, The Prologue*, or *The Knightes Tale*, and carefully compare the vocabulary of these selections with that of the present day. The words

may be grouped into the following classes: (1) Words which survive with the same meaning; (2) words which survive in form, but which have acquired so different a meaning that the modern forms could not be used in the particular context; (3) words which have been lost altogether. In this case it should be noticed what kind of words have replaced them, whether native English or words of foreign origin.

Again, the student may start from Modern English, and analyse the vocabulary of a simple piece of prose or verse into groups of words of various origin—native English, Norse, Norman French, Later French, Latin, and so on. In both of these operations the aid of a reliable Etymological dictionary of moderate size, such as Mr. Skeat's *Concise Dictionary*, is indispensable, and in case the student starts from Old or Middle English, a good Old or Middle English dictionary is necessary.

Most people of some education will recognize a word as English, French, or Latin, in the majority of cases, and these are the most important foreign elements in English. The next important element is Old Norse, which is not so readily distinguished by the ordinary student from native English. The most vital point for the young student is to know at least which of the words which he uses are really English, in the sense of being survivals of the original vocabulary of our race, which it had in common with the other closely related tongues of the Germanic family. If, in addition to this, he also knows which the most familiar words now in use are of Norse origin, and can recognize as such the Norman-French words and the Latin, so much the better. But this

knowledge must be obtained by the student for himself by the means suggested above. It is of no educational value whatever to bloat out the pages of a small book on the History of English with long lists of words, which exist in English perhaps, but which are derived from languages with which the student has no first-hand acquaintance.

We shall now endeavour to make clear, in as brief a space as possible, first *how* the vocabulary of one language is influenced by that of another; secondly, the principal tests which determine the origin of a foreign word, and the approximate date at which it was borrowed; and, thirdly, what is the subsequent fate of words which are borrowed from one language into another. We shall then be in a position to discuss the principal sources of the words from foreign languages borrowed by English at an early period, and to give a few typical examples of such as survive in familiar Modern English speech.

How One Language influences the Vocabulary of Another.

This influence may be exerted either *directly*, by the actual personal association of the speakers of the two languages, or *indirectly*, through books written in a foreign tongue.

The former of these modes is obviously the more potent and thorough in its effects. Supposing that two races, speaking different languages, live side by side, associate intimately with each other, intermarry, and finally merge into one people. What happens in such a case is that gradually a large number of

speakers of both races know and speak both languages equally well and equally frequently. For several generations, probably, the two races which are in process of fusion are bilingual—that is, they can speak two languages. Gradually one language is spoken less and less, and finally gives way entirely before the other. This is what happened in England when Englishmen and Danes lived alongside of each other, and again later on, after the Norman settlement.

Now, the bilingual period is the time when the two languages influence each other. A Dane who knew English as well as his own language, would often mingle—perhaps without realizing it—English words with his own language, and these would be perfectly well understood by his hearers, both English and Danish, since they all spoke both tongues. Similarly, an Englishman living in a district settled by Danes, and who very likely was half a Dane in blood, introduced Danish words when speaking English ; he spoke, in fact, a mixture of both languages, so far as the words used were concerned. Thus, Danish words came to be used instead of, or as well as, English words of the same meaning. The result of such habits, when Danish had died out as an independent language, was that hundreds of Danish words remained in common use, and these sometimes ousted the native English words. This is the most complete form of influence exerted by one language upon another.

Less powerful than this, but still not without effect, is the case where a number of inhabitants of a country visit another land, either to fight, govern, or

trade with the natives. They learn something, at least, of the foreign language—the names of foods, weapons, or words to express native customs which have no counterpart in their own country. When they return home, these new words become current among their immediate circle, and some of them spread to wider spheres.

Indirect influence upon vocabulary is often exerted through a language whose literature is much studied, and whose Art, Philosophy, and Culture are highly prized and widely known by foreign races. Latin had in this way a profound influence upon all the civilized languages of Europe in the Middle Ages, because the old literature of Rome was universally read, and also because the Roman form of Christianity had a wide acceptance, and the official language of this Roman Christianity was Latin. With the revival of learning, Greek became a common means for the precise expression of the technical ideas of Art, Science, and Philosophy, while French has been, of all the Modern languages, the chief vehicle of culture from the Middle Ages down to the present time. Hence all European languages have felt more or less deeply these influences—indirect for the most part in the case of Latin and Greek, but in that of French, directly, as well.

Tests of Origin of Foreign Words, and of the Time of their Adoption.

When during the late war in South Africa the style of newspaper correspondents bristled with such words as 'kop,' 'kopje,' 'spruit,' and the rest, or

when our friends returned from the war and used these words in their conversation (they pronounced them, for the most part, like 'copy' and 'sproot'), there was little doubt in anyone's mind that these strange words had been learnt during the last year or two from Dutch speakers in South Africa. But in the case of words borrowed hundred of years ago, perhaps, it is not always so easy to settle the language from which they came, or the period at which they were acquired. The first point is that the form of the words must be such that we can recognize them as belonging to a particular language, and the next that we should be able to establish the possibility of the contact, direct or indirect, between the speakers of the language whence the words come, and those of the language which has, as we assume, adopted them. Therefore, if we assume a certain foreign word in Old English to be of Latin origin, the first question is, Could Old English speakers and writers at any period have come into contact with Latin in any shape or form? Supposing this point to be satisfactorily—that is, affirmatively—settled, the next is, When did the borrowing take place? Now, Latin, while it was a living language, underwent changes of pronunciation like other languages, and varied considerably, in its spoken form, from the stereotyped and fixed form of the Classical writers. Therefore, we have to inquire, At what period was this particular word pronounced in spoken Latin in a way approximating to the form which it bears in Old English? If we can settle this, then we shall be pretty near being able to fix more or less exactly the date of the loan, since the Latin word

was differently pronounced at different times, and among different races. All the good little books on English tell us that the same foreign word may be borrowed several times over into English, at different periods, and each time with a new pronunciation. A stock example of this is the Low Latin word *hospitalia*, which we have in the forms *hostel*, from an early form of French which had changed it considerably; *hotel*, from Modern French *hôtel*, which has changed it still more, having lost the *s*; and *hospital*, which is the Latin word practically unchanged, and which the English may have borrowed any time direct from the language of Latin books.

Therefore, if we wish to have an intelligent knowledge of the origin of such loan-words as are of any antiquity, it is of the highest importance to pay attention to their *form* or pronunciation at different periods, both in the language from which and into which they are borrowed. It is further necessary to possess sufficient historical knowledge to show how and when the two peoples came into contact, direct or literary.

The Fate of Foreign Words in a Language.

When a foreign word passes into common use in a language, by one of the processes described above, it has at first, a form as near as possible to that which it bore in the language from which it was taken. It is necessary, for clearness, to distinguish between words derived direct from living speech and those derived through the written language.

We will consider first the fate of words taken from

a living spoken language. When a speaker acquires a foreign word, and, for some reason or other, uses it when speaking his own tongue, the pronunciation which he gives the word will be as near as he can make it to that current at the time among those from whom he has learnt the word—that is, the native speakers of the foreign language. The degree of fidelity to the original native pronunciation which the word retains in the language into which it is introduced will depend upon the familiarity which speakers of the latter possess with the language from which they borrow, and also upon how far the sounds of the two languages differ or agree. In the case which we discussed above, of Danish words passing into English, we must remember, first, that the Englishmen who adopted Danish words probably knew this language very well, and, secondly, that the sounds of English and Danish were probably very much alike. In fact, Danish may well have been spoken by the Danes themselves with an 'English accent.' Therefore, the Danish words might retain in English a pronunciation almost identical with the Danish pronunciation then in vogue, and yet not sound strange to English ears when used in an English sentence. As a general rule, we may say that a foreign word does not retain, in wide and common usage, among speakers of a different language, a pronunciation which is quite strange to that language. Speakers give to foreign words the nearest corresponding sound of their own language to that of the word in its native dialect. The differences, if any, between the two are often so slight that they cannot be expressed by ordinary spelling.

By examining a certain number of borrowed words in any language, we are enabled to say how any particular sound is treated by the borrowers. We can say such and such a sound in this or that language appears as such and such a sound in this or that other language, in words borrowed by the latter from the former.

But if the sounds of a language change, words borrowed before the changes will naturally show the results of these changes. Now, the word for 'rope' in Welsh is *rhaff*, which we believe to be a loan-word from English. But it cannot have been borrowed from Mod. Eng., on account of the difference of vowel. We know, however, that in O.E. the pronunciation was *rāp*, and we therefore conclude that this word was borrowed by the Welsh before the sound *a* had become *ō*—that is, in the Old English period. In Welsh *a* has undergone no change. Again, the words '*street*' and '*strath*' are both ultimately derived from the Latin *strāta via*, 'a paved way.' In one case the Latin *t* has been preserved to the present day in English, in the other it has become *th*. Clearly these two forms of the same Latin word could not have come into English at the same period, and through the same linguistic medium, for if the English were able to reproduce the Latin *t*-sound, they would not at the same time, and in the same word, have been obliged to substitute another sound for it, as in *strath*. Therefore, the latter word must have been borrowed from speakers who at the time of the borrowing had changed the pronunciation of Latin *t* to *th*.

Loan-words, then, appear in a language with a

pronunciation which, while it does not in itself proclaim them to be foreigners, at the same time reproduces *approximately* the native sounds.

The next point is that when once words have got a footing in a language their subsequent development is identical with that of the native words of the language. Their sounds are those of the language which has adopted them, and any changes which these sounds undergo extend naturally to the borrowed and native words alike. For example, we have seen (p. 135 (1) *ante*) that M.E. *ā* became *ē* (like French *é*) in Early Modern English. The words which had *ā* in M.E. were not only native English words like *nāmĕ*, but also Norman-French words like *blāme*; but both classes of words have developed alike, and in Present-day English *name* and *blame* have the same sound. When once established in English usage, foreign words become, to all intents and purposes, English words.

Although it is not usual for foreign words to preserve, when borrowed, a sound which is altogether alien and unknown in the language into which they have passed, this sometimes occurs in the case of words taken from a language which is commonly studied by educated persons. In this case the knowledge of the spoken form of the foreign language sometimes influences the pronunciation of words among the educated classes. Thus, the word *envelope*, which is Modern French, although thoroughly naturalized in English speech among all classes, has three pronunciations in this country—(1) That which gives the French sound of a nasal vowel to the first syllable; (2) '*on*velope,' which is the English

imitation of the French sound; (3) '*envelope*,' which is what is called a 'spelling-pronunciation,' and originated among people who did not *hear* the word, but made their first acquaintance with it in its written form. This last is probably the commonest at the present time among all classes, '*onvelope*' being old-fashioned, and the pure French pronunciation, as is natural, being given up in the case of a word which is felt by the community at large to be thoroughly English. In any case, the foreign sound could never occur except among those who had studied French pronunciation. It will be readily understood that the only kind of pronunciation which is possible for words which we have never heard pronounced, and know only from books, is one in which the most usual English value is given to the letters. This kind of pronunciation may become fixed and traditional as the words in question become popular. An example of this is the French word *route*, often pronounced to rhyme with *out*, although the French pronunciation (like 'root') is still the most usual among the educated. In this case there is no reason why the native sound of the word should not be retained, as it is a common sound in English, but those unacquainted with French who saw the word for the first time in a book could not know that *ou* is pronounced like English '*oo*.' Such a word as *machine*, on the other hand, which everybody is bound to know, long before they learn to read, retains the French pronunciation of *ch* and *i*, in spite of the spelling.

Words from Purely Literary Sources.

The principle which determines the form of this very large class of words is that which we have just noted in the pronunciations *route*, *en*velope. While some words are living forms for one class, but merely book forms for another, words which are taken from the literature of languages no longer spoken must, of necessity, be, in origin, book forms for all. Words taken from Latin and Greek direct are simply Englished by giving the ordinary sounds which are associated at the time of borrowing with the letters in the word. In a large number of cases we have in English words of Latin origin which have come in through Norman or Continental French, and which before they passed into English had undergone the normal sound changes in popular speech, and also the same word, taken, at a different time, direct from literary Latin, and preserving sounds which had been lost long before in the spoken language. *Caitif*, *captive*, both = Latin *captivus*; *chief*, Norman-French *chēf*, from a popular Latin *capo*, from Latin *caput*, compared with *capit*-al, etc.; *benison* and *benediction*, from Latin *benedictionem*, are among the stock examples of this.

The Sources of Foreign Loan-Words in Old English.

1. Celtic.—The influence of this family of languages has not profoundly affected English or any other Germanic language. It is, however, one of the earliest foreign influences that can be traced in our

language, and was first exerted before our forefathers left the Continent. A word from Continental Celtic which is found in O.E. and its cognates in the other Germanic languages is *rīce*, 'kingdom,' 'rule.' This word survives in the present day only in the compound bishop-*ric*.

2. Latin.—There are three distinct groups of words from this source found in O.E.: those borrowed on the Continent by the English, in common with other Germanic peoples; those borrowed from Latin-speaking Britons in these islands; those acquired at a later period through the direct influence of Roman Christianity after the conversion of the English. The loans of these three periods are distinguished by their form in O.E. Only words of each class which survive in Mod. Eng. are given in the following examples.

(*a*) *Continental Latin.*—Among the principal tests of this class of loans are the retention in O.E. of Latin *p*, *t*, c (= *k*) between vowels, and the presence of the word in other Germanic languages in such a form as to imply that it was acquired before the languages separated, and then underwent the characteristic sound changes of each language. These tests are fulfilled by the following words: O.E. *nǣp*, from Lat. *nāpus* (*cf.* Scotch *neap* and Eng. tur-*nip*, in which last the vowel of the word has been shortened in the unstressed syllable of a compound); O.E. *mynet*, 'coin,' from Lat. *monēta*, Eng. *mint;* O.E. *fīc*-bēām, 'fig,' Lat. *fīcus*. This word has been lost, our *fig*, as its final *g* shows, having come to us through Norman French.

Latin *strāta*-via survives in O.E. *strǣt*, Mod. Eng.

street; O.E. *ċȳse*, *ċēse*, from Lat. *cāseum*, has become Mod. Eng. *cheese*. *Kitchen*, O.E. *cyċene*, Lat. *coquina*, is probably a Continental survival.

(*b*) *Latin Words acquired in Britain*.—It has been maintained with great probability that the educated upper classes among the British of the towns in these islands still spoke a form of Latin at the time of the arrival (fifth century) of the English from the Continent. In any case, it is certain that a large number of Latin words were in common use among them, and many of these passed into English. But the Latin in use in Britain had changed considerably in pronunciation from the older form of it which the English had already met in their old homes. For instance, *c* (*k*) between vowels was voiced, as is seen in O.E. *cugele*, 'cowl,' from some such form as *cugul*, earlier Latin *cuculla*. Similarly, *p* had become *b* between vowels, and this sound had still further developed into a sound something like *v*, though written *f* in O.E.—*prāfost*, Lat. *præpositus*, but Brito-Lat. *prāvost*. This is Eng. *provost*. Another very common O.E. word which would appear to have been borrowed in this country is *ċæster*, 'city,' Brito-Lat. *castr*, Lat. *castra*. This word survives in *Chester*, and in other place-names such as *Rochester*, etc. The vowel change seen in the O.E. word is of English origin, and took place in English mouths after the borrowing.

(*c*) *Latin Words of Later Date derived from the Roman Missionaries*.—Many of these words, which were very numerous in O.E., have been lost. Among survivals of the class are probably *pope*, O.E. *pāpa*, Lat. *pāpa*; *martyr*.

There are words associated with the Christian religion which were undoubtedly borrowed on the Continent while the English were still pagan, such as *devil*, O.E. *dēōfol*, Lat. *diabolus*; *church*, O.E. *ċyrċe*, from Gk. *κυριακά*, 'belonging to the Lord'; *bishop*, O.E. *bisċop*, Lat. *episcopus*, from Gk. *ἐπίσκοπος*.

3. **Celtic Words borrowed in Britain.**—It is surprising how few of these there are in O.E. compared with the number of Latin words acquired from Celtic speakers. We may mention *brocc*, 'badger,' Old Irish *brocc*; *down* (sub.), 'hill,' O.E. *dūn*, Irish *dūn*. The English word *dune* (sand-dune) is also of Celtic origin, and is the same word as the last, but has reached us, as its form shows, through French. The same is true of our word *druid*, although in O.E. there was a word *drȳ*, 'magician,' which has been lost, from a form like that of Old Irish *drui*.

4. **Scandinavian Words acquired from the Danes.**—We have already mentioned the historical events which led to the introduction of this element into our vocabulary (pp. 114, 115 *ante*). The number of words of Scandinavian origin which appear in writings of the O.E. period are exceedingly few, and of these none appear to have survived. They are chiefly the names of things typically Danish—the names of ships, coins, weapons. We may, however, mention *take*, *husband* (in the sense of householder), and *husting*, which are found in Early Transition (eleventh and twelfth centuries).

Extensive borrowing of vocabulary is facilitated, as we have seen (pp. 153-4 *ante*), by fusion of race, and it is not until some time after the Norman Conquest that Danish words appear in large numbers. Their

appearance, as is natural, is earlier than that of the Norman-French element as a considerable factor of the vocabulary.

Among the Scandinavian words which appear in the writings of the thirteenth century, and which are firmly established as part of our language, are: M.E. *skinn, skin* (which has replaced O.E. *hȳd*, 'hide,' especially as applied to the covering of human beings); *skill*, instead of O.E. *cræft*, 'craft'; *ill*, which has largely taken the place of O.E. *sēōc*, 'sick,' in Standard English; *sky*, instead of O.E. *uprodor;* the pronouns *they, them, their*, instead of O.E. *hie, heom, hira*, which, however, are still used in Chaucer. (On the pronouns, see pp. 177-8 below.)

Norman-French Words acquired from Norman spoken in England.

In the Peterborough Chronicle, written during the first half of the twelfth century, we already find a certain number of these words: *chaplain, chancellor, empress, countess, peace, court, tower, prison, justice, treasure, false, false*-hood, etc. The earliest to pass into English were naturally the names of offices, officers, or institutions associated with the new order of things under the Normans. All the above are of this class, with the exception of *peace*, which might have been expressed quite as well by the English *friþ*, now lost.

There were no O.E. words for *titles*, apart from duties. The English *earl*, a common word in O.E., implied a man of noble or gentle blood, and, later, also a definite office under the King. It has survived

in English as a title, but *countess*, the name for the wife of the earl, in the new sense, comes from the Normans. It is significant that while the most familiar relationships of life—*father*, *mother*, *brother*, *sister*—are English—the remoter connexions—*uncle*, *aunt*, *nephew*, *niece*—are Norman.

Some words have survived in two forms—one Norman French, the other from the Picard Dialect. N.F. *chattel*, *chase*, compared with Pic. *cattle*, *catch*, are examples of this.

Words direct from Latin came into English in the Early Norman period, and as a rule they have undergone little change. Thus, *procession*, which occurs in the Peterborough Chronicle, might have been borrowed yesterday, so far as its form goes.

Many Norman words were adopted and have remained, for which the English equivalent still survives:

English	kingdom,	folk,	wish,	child,	thief,	bloom,
French	realm,	people,	desire,	infant,	robber,	flower,

and so on.

On the other hand, there are many Norman words which have entirely displaced the English equivalents, and which are therefore indispensable. Such are *justice* (*rihtǣw*), *chapel* (*ġebedhus*), *peace* (*friþ*), *crown* (*cynehelm*), *power* (*onwald*), *poor* (*earm*), *turn* (verb, *wendan*), *saint* (*hālga*), *prison* (*cweartern*), and many others. The English word is preserved in '*All Hallows*.'

Words which have come into English from Norman French, a language spoken for several hundreds of years in this country, and others, introduced from other French dialects during the M E.

period, have become so much part of English that they are not felt to be exotic or strange in any way, and are as essential as elements of speech at the present day as the words of the old native English or Scandinavian stock. It is calculated that about 45 per cent. of our vocabulary is Norman French.

It is not always easy to distinguish from among the French words common in M.E. those of Anglo-Norman or Anglo-French origin from those which may have come from a Continental form.

The most certain of the latter are words like *catch*, compared with Norman *chase* (both from Latin *captiare*); *market*, compared with Central French *marché*, where the Picard origin is shown by *ck* instead of *ch*.

Other words, such as *decoction*, *hospitality*, *existence*, *triumph*, which are found in the works of Chaucer and his contemporaries, and for which a Parisian origin is claimed, might have come direct from Latin, with certain modifications of form to adapt them to the ordinary pattern of English (or French-English) words. We may contrast Norman French *convey*, *leal*, *realm*, *caitif*, with Central French *convoy*, *loyal*, *royal*, *captive*. The last is, however, a learned French form, direct from Latin, the popular form being *chétif*.

There is no doubt that many words of purely Latin origin and form were incorporated into English from the Vulgate. These were generally modified according to the French model in dealing with such words. Some Latin words from this source belonging to the M.E. period are *benediction* (the popular form of which is *benison*), *corrupt*, *aggravate*.

Such words, however, are of little interest con-

sidered as typical M.E. borrowings, since if they were borrowed to-day direct from Latin they would receive precisely the same forms. Latin words borrowed since, or even during, the late O.E. period from literary sources have undergone practically no change, beyond that involved by the change of vowel sounds which has taken place during the Modern period. These changes affect also our pronunciation of Latin itself.

Other Foreign Influences during M.E. Period.

Italian.—The word *pilgrim* appears to be from Old Ital. *pelegrino*, 'wanderer,' the Old Fr. form being *pelerin*. This word was no doubt acquired direct by persons who went on pilgrimages to Rome.

Other words of Italian origin which were introduced during the M.E. period, not direct, but through French, were: *alarm*, from Italian *allearme; florin*, the Old Fr. form of Italian *florino;* and *brigand*, Ital. *brigante*.

There are a few words of Arabic origin which got into English in the M.E. period through French, from Spanish, such as *sugar, alembic*.

The Loan-Words of the Modern Period.

The principal sources of these are Latin, Greek, Spanish, Italian, French, and some few from outlandish tongues, such as *tobacco* and *potato*, through Spanish from the language of Hayti.

The literary language of the sixteenth century does not, on the whole, show a heavily Latinized vocabulary. The Prayer Books of Edward VI. con-

tain few words which are not at least in literary use at the present day. A beautiful phrase, 'the immarcescible crown of glory,' occurs, it is true, in the later versions with the Latin word changed to 'never-fading.' At a later date, Francis Bacon crowds his writings with Latin words in a thin English disguise, which have never obtained a footing in the language, and the same is largely true of Sir Thomas Browne in the next century. The taste for a Latinized diction fluctuates from age to age, and among different classes of writers and speakers. There are very few of these later Latin words that we cannot very well dispense with. Words like *negatory* and *meticulous* can generally be replaced with advantage by genuine English words. However, a good writer or speaker may occasionally use an exotic word with telling effect, the slight vagueness of the new coinages frequently imparting a certain suggestiveness to a rhetorical phrase.

Italian influence, which began again, after the time of Chaucer, in the sixteenth century, and has continued more or less ever since, has given us many words relating to art, and also to objects of every-day life, which are familiar to all. *Balcony*, *broccoli*, *colonel*, *gondola*, *gusto*, *macaroni*, *musket*, *umbrella*, are a few words of this origin which we could hardly do without.

Spanish influence was not inconsiderable in the sixteenth century, through literature, through the Court, and through the navigators who explored the New World. *Alcove*, *don*, *dulcimer*, *lackey*, *commodore*, *flotilla*, *coral*, *ranch*, *cork*, are enough to show how essential some Spanish words have become.

The Greek element is chiefly of modern introduction, and is used much to express sciences and scientific conceptions. Words of this kind are being coined every day, and they offer no difficulty in recognition. Such words as *geology, chiropody, phonograph, philology, telescope, telegraph*, etc., are easily explained by the help of a Greek Lexicon or a good English Dictionary. It is interesting to observe that words like these—the concoctions, for the most part, or at least the borrowings, of the learned, very often become perfectly popular words which every child knows and uses.

There are other words, which are ultimately of Greek origin, which have filtered into English through the medium of other languages, chiefly French, which are much older, and often less easy to distinguish. Such are *blame, currant, dropsy, fancy, surgeon*. The last appeared already in M.E., from the shortened Old French form *surgien*; the longer form *chirurgeon*, also from a later French source, was used in English in the eighteenth century, and *chirurgien* is the only form now used in French.

The Modern French loans are easily distinguished from the older strata by their pronunciation. They retain as far as possible the French sounds. Contrast the pronunciation of *ch* in *chandelier, machine, papier-maché, chatelaine, cachet*, etc., with that of the M.E. loans *chivalry, chandler, chine, chief*, etc. Compare, again, the initial and final consonants of the old word *judge* (Old Fr. *juge*) with those in *genre, rouge*, etc. Again, note the pronunciation of *suave, cache, vase, ennui* (Norman *annoy*), *migraine, soirée, Bon Marché*, etc.

We have now enumerated the principal sources from which our vocabulary has been enriched. Those who wish to make a more detailed study of this aspect of the language should consult Professor Jespersen's *Growth and Structure of the English Language*, and Professor Skeat's *Principles of English Etymology*.

CHAPTER XII

ENGLISH INFLEXIONS

It will be unnecessary for our present purpose to do more than attempt to throw some light upon those few inflexions which remain in Mod. Eng. by tracing them to their earlier forms.

The Articles.

(a) *Definite Article.*—*The* (note its three pronunciations in Mod. Eng., p. 72 (7) *ante*) appears as an uninflected form as early as the twelfth century. In O.E. the definite article, which was really a demonstrative pronoun, was fully declined in all three genders, and in both numbers. The Nominative Masculine Singular was *se*, the Feminine *seo*, the Neuter *þæt*. *Se* in Transition English becomes *þe* through the influence of the other cases, which all had an initial þ (*th*). The eighteenth century spelling *ye* for *the*, and the contraction *y*[t] for *that*, are reminiscences of the old symbol þ. *Y* here was, of course, always pronounced as *th*.

A trace of the old Accusative Masculine survives in the expression *for the nonce*; earlier *for then ōnĕs*. The *n* of the Accusative has become attached to the following word, just as in Mod. Eng. the pronunciation *a negg* for *an egg* is often heard.

The old Neuter *þæt* survives in the now obsolete or vulgar *t'other*, earlier *the t'other*, from *þet ōþer*.

(*b*) *Indefinite Article.*—In Mod. Eng. *an* before vowels, *a* before consonants. This word was originally the numeral *ān*, 'one.' Being unstressed when used as an article, it was shortened before the change of O.E. *ā* to *ō* (*cf.* p. 134 above). Historically speaking, we must say that the *n* of *an* was retained before vowels, but not before consonants.

Several words have acquired an initial *n* from a 'wrong' analysis of the original form in combination with *an*. *Newt* stands for *an ewt* (O.E. *efeta*); the form *eft* and the provincial *ewt* represent the earlier form.

On the other hand, other words have lost an initial *n* by a similar syllable division. Thus, *an apron* is from earlier *a naperon* (*cf.* Scotch *napery*); *an umpire* is *a numpire* (French *nonpair*); *an adder* stands for *a nadder* (O.E. *nǣddre*).

Declension of Nouns.

This has been reduced to the simplest form, since only the possessive case singular and the plural number are expressed in speech.

The written language puts an apostrophe before the *s* of the possessive—*man's*, *dog's*, etc.—because it was formerly believed that *-s* was a 'corruption' of *his*—*the man his hat*, etc. As a matter of fact, this suffix represents an old *-es* (*cf.* pp. 37, 38 above, for the various forms of this suffix, and that of the plural in *s*, in the spoken language). Chaucer still retains a Feminine suffix in *-e* for the possessive (*cf.* *In hope to stonden in his Ladye grace*).

There are four main types of Plurals in Mod.

Eng.: (1) Those which take the suffix *-s*, etc., which include nearly all the words in the language; (2) those which take *-en—ox-en*; (3) those which change the vowel—*mouse, mice*, etc.; (4) those which make no change—*deer, sheep*. Although the written language distinguishes the Possessive Plural from the Singular by writing the apostrophe after the *-s*—*dogs', cats'*, etc.—there is, of course, no real difference between the Possessive Plural and that of the Singular in Class (1).

Class (1) was represented in O.E. by words which added *-as* to the Nominative and Accusative Plural; in M.E. this became *-es*, and in Mod. Eng. the vowel has been lost in pronunciation, except after *s* or *sh*—*kisses, fishes*, etc. Words of this class were all Masculine in O.E., but in M.E. the class was largely extended.

Side by side with this type of declension, there existed also in O.E. the so-called *Weak Declension*, which formed the Nominative and Accusative Plural by the addition of the suffix *-an*, in M.E. *-en*. This was a large class in O.E. In M.E. the Northern and Midland dialects reduced it, while the Saxon dialects increased it. In Modern Standard English the Midland habit has prevailed, with the result that we have only *ox-en, brethr-en, childr-en*. The *r* in the last word is itself the remains of an old Plural suffix —O.E. *ċild-ru*.

Class (3), or the *Mutation-plurals*, was considerably larger in O.E. The change of vowel is due to the process described above (pp. 129-131). *Goat, shroud, cow, book*, are among the words which in O.E. had a mutated vowel in the Plural, and also in the Dative Singular. In the words which retain the mutation

Mod. Eng. this only appears in the Plural, the whole singular being the unmutated type.

It should be noted that all the survivals of this declension in Mod. Eng. are common, familiar words, as only such could resist the tendency to level all declension under one type. The form *kye*, Plural of *cow*, in Northern Dialects is the old mutated form; the poetical *kine* is a double plural with both mutation and the *-n* suffix of the Weak Declension.

Class (4) represents old Neuter words, which in O.E. remained unchanged in Nominative and Accusative Plural. The whole of these, with the exception of the two mentioned above, have been levelled under the general type which takes *-s*, etc., in the Plural. *Wife*, *house*, *calf*, and many others, originally belonged to this class. Traces of an old Dative Plural in *-um* survive in *whilom*, O.E. *hwīlum*, 'at times,' and in *seldom*. The former was a noun, the latter an adjective meaning 'rare.' The Dative Singular and Plural were often used adverbially.

Comparison of Adjectives.

The old declension of adjectives has been completely lost, and concord is no longer possible; on comparison remains to be mentioned.

The comparative suffix *-er*, and the superlative - represent old formative elements which are used M.E. and O.E.

At the present time only *elder* and *eldest*, deri from *old*, show mutated forms, but in O.E. *yo* *long*, *strong*, and several others, also had a ch of vowel in comparative and superlative. Thi again the result of *i*-mutation, for originally

were two types: *-or-* in comparative and *-ost-* in superlative, which wrought no change in the preceding vowel; and *-ir-*, *-ist-*, which produced the modification. *Elder*, *eldest*, are survivals of this latter type, and are now used with a different sense from *older*, *oldest*. These are, of course, new formations from the positive *old*, and not the descendants of the old comparative and superlative.

There are some adjectives which, from the earliest period, use in the other degrees, forms from an altogether different root from that from which gave rise to the positive. Such are *good, better, best; bad, worse, worst*. The form *worse* appears strange as a comparative, and, in fact, a very natural feeling for analogy has produced a form *worser*. As a matter of fact, the old comparative suffix lurks in the *s* of *worse*. The ordinary O.E. suffix is *-ira-* or *-ora-*, but this stands for an earlier *-iza-*, *-oza-* (still found in Gothic), and the *z* is produced from a still earlier *-s-*, which, under certain conditions of the accent, at a very primitive period was voiced—*i.e.*, became *z*. In *worse* these conditions were apparently not present, with the result that the *-s-* remains. The O.E. form was *wyrsa*, from an older *wursisa(n)*.

Pronouns.

The following forms of the personal pronouns are normally developed from the corresponding earlier forms, and call for no remark: *I, thou, thee, he, we, us*. The objective case of the 1st person, *me*, now does duty both for Accusative and Dative; originally it was an Accusative form.

Him is also an old Dative; the original Accusative,

O.E. *hĭnĕ*, having been lost, except inasmuch as it survives in provincial dialects as '*un*.' The Feminine Nominative *she* is rather difficult to explain. In O.E. it was *hēō*, which in M.E. became in some dialects *hē*, and was thus indistinguishable from the Masculine. In O.E. the Feminine demonstrative pronoun, or definite article, *sēō* was often used simply as a personal pronoun. It has been suggested that *she* is a mixture of both forms, but this offers difficulties. At any rate, a form spelt *scǣ* occurs in the Peterborough Chronicle, and this is apparently the ancestor of our form, though how it arose we do not exactly know.

You is an old Accusative and Dative Plural, although now used as a Nominative both in the Singular and Plural. The obsolete *ye* is the representative of the old Nominative Plural. *Ye* is used already in the seventeenth century, indifferently as a Nominative or an oblique case, as may be seen from the Authorized Version of the Bible.

They and *them* are of Scandinavian origin, and have replaced the English forms *hi*, *hem*, the latter of which Chaucer still uses.

The obsolete or very colloquial *'em* is not a contraction of *them*, but is the old *hem*, with the initial aspirate lost through want of stress.

In the same way *it*, from an earlier *hit* (still retained in Scotch), has lost its *h*.

As a matter of fact, in rapid speech all the pronouns which begin with *h*—*he*, *him*, *his*, *her*—lose the aspirate when unstressed, and are thus on all fours with *'em*, *it*, and the provincial '*un*,' from *hine*, which has been already mentioned.

Possessive Pronouns.

The forms *my, mine, thy, thine, his, her, your, our,* are the old Genitives of the personal pronouns. In O.E. they were used as simple Genitives after certain verbs; for instance, as *God ūrĕ hĕlpĕ,* 'God help us,' were also used as possessive adjectives, most of them in that case being fully inflected—*mīnra* (Genitive Plural), etc.

The O.E. forms *mīn, þīn,* were retained in M.E. in their full forms, but later on lost *n* before words beginning with a consonant. *My, thy,* are thus from M.E. *mī, þī; mine, thine,* from the forms before vowels.

His has no distinguishing *absolute* form, but to the analogy of this unvarying form with *s* are doubtless due the forms *hers, ours, yours.*

On the other hand, the *n* in *thine, mine,* gives rise to the vulgar *hisn, hern, yourn, ourn.*

His was the Genitive not only of the Masculine Pronoun, but also of the Neuter *hit,* and was so used down to the sixteenth century, when we find both *his* and simply *it,* where we should use *its.* The latter was first used in the seventeenth century, and was a new formation, on the analogy of *his.*

Their is Scandinavian, and has replaced the English form *hir,* which Chaucer still uses.

Demonstrative Pronouns.

This is the old Neuter form of the pronoun with the same meaning. The Plural *these* appears to be derived from the Feminine Singular of the same word.

That is the old Neuter Singular of the definite article and demonstrative pronoun—Masculine *se*

O.E. *hĭnĕ*, having been lost, except inasmuch as it survives in provincial dialects as '*un*.' The Feminine Nominative *she* is rather difficult to explain. In O.E. it was *hēō*, which in M.E. became in some dialects *hē*, and was thus indistinguishable from the Masculine. In O.E. the Feminine demonstrative pronoun, or definite article, *sēō* was often used simply as a personal pronoun. It has been suggested that *she* is a mixture of both forms, but this offers difficulties. At any rate, a form spelt *sċǣ* occurs in the Peterborough Chronicle, and this is apparently the ancestor of our form, though how it arose we do not exactly know.

You is an old Accusative and Dative Plural, although now used as a Nominative both in the Singular and Plural. The obsolete *ye* is the representative of the old Nominative Plural. *Ye* is used already in the seventeenth century, indifferently as a Nominative or an oblique case, as may be seen from the Authorized Version of the Bible.

They and *them* are of Scandinavian origin, and have replaced the English forms *hi*, *hem*, the latter of which Chaucer still uses.

The obsolete or very colloquial *'em* is not a contraction of *them*, but is the old *hem*, with the initial aspirate lost through want of stress.

In the same way *it*, from an earlier *hit* (still retained in Scotch), has lost its *h*.

As a matter of fact, in rapid speech all the pronouns which begin with *h*—*he*, *him*, *his*, *her*—lose the aspirate when unstressed, and are thus on all fours with *'em*, *it*, and the provincial '*un*,' from *hine*, which has been already mentioned.

Possessive Pronouns.

The forms *my, mine, thy, thine, his, her, your, our,* are the old Genitives of the personal pronouns. In O.E. they were used as simple Genitives after certain verbs; for instance, as God *ūrē helpe*, 'God help us,' were also used as possessive adjectives, most of them in that case being fully inflected—*mīnra* (Genitive Plural), etc.

The O.E. forms *mīn, þīn*, were retained in M.E. in their full forms, but later on lost *n* before words beginning with a consonant. *My, thy*, are thus from M.E. *mī, þī; mine, thine*, from the forms before vowels.

His has no distinguishing *absolute* form, but to the analogy of this unvarying form with *s* are doubtless due the forms *hers, ours, yours.*

On the other hand, the *n* in *thine, mine*, gives rise to the vulgar *hisn, hern, yourn, ourn.*

His was the Genitive not only of the Masculine Pronoun, but also of the Neuter *hit*, and was so used down to the sixteenth century, when we find both *his* and simply *it*, where we should use *its*. The latter was first used in the seventeenth century, and was a new formation, on the analogy of *his*.

Their is Scandinavian, and has replaced the English form *hir*, which Chaucer still uses.

Demonstrative Pronouns.

This is the old Neuter form of the pronoun with the same meaning. The Plural *these* appears to be derived from the Feminine Singular of the same word.

That is the old Neuter Singular of the definite article and demonstrative pronoun—Masculine *se*

(whence the indeclinable *the*; *cf.* p. 173 above), Feminine *sēō*, Neuter *þæt*. *Those* is from O.E. *þās*, the Plural of *þes* (Masculine), *þēōs* (Feminine, whence *these*), *þis* (Neuter).

Relatives and Interrogatives.

The Mod. Eng. relatives *which*, *who*, were originally only interrogatives.

In O.E. *hwā*, 'who' (of persons), and the Neuter *hwæt*, 'what,' were used as substantives; *hwelċ*, *hwilċ*, 'which,' was used both as a substantive and as an adjective. The definite article or demonstrative *se*, *sēō*, *þæt*, was used relatively, either alone or with the relative particle *þe*; and *that* is still so used in Modern English.

Verbs.

The two main classes of verbs in English are the *Weak*, which form their past tense and past participle by the addition of *-ed*, *-d*, or *-t* to the stem; and the *Strong*, which do not add these suffixes, but undergo a change in the root vowel.

The Present Indicative.

The inflexions of this tense are the same in all regular verbs, whether strong or weak.

I love	we	
thou lovest	you	love.
he loves, loveth	they	

The now obsolete forms *lov-est*, *lov-eth*, represent the M.E. Southern types; the latter is also Midland. The usual *love-s* is characteristic of Northern in M.E. The Plural in M.E. was *-es* in the North, and this

still survives in the Modern Northern dialects and in Scotch. In the South the Plural suffix was *-eth*, now completely lost, but still used by Chaucer, along with other forms, and by Wycliff. The Midland suffix of the Plural present in M.E. was *-en*, which is the usual form in Chaucer, and from which our present flexionless form is derived. The weakening, and even the occasional dropping, of the final *-n* is found in Chaucer, and by the beginning of the sixteenth century these also had disappeared from pronunciation.

Present Participle.

The Mod. Eng. suffix *-ing* is not an old participial ending. The Present Participle in O.E. was *-end*, and in M.E. this is still retained as *-ind(e)* in the South, *-end(e)* in the Midlands, *-and(e)* in the North. This suffix was replaced during the M.E. period by the ending *-ing*, which was originally used in substantives derived from verbs, such as O.E. *leornung* or *leorning*, 'learning.' This is the ancestor of our present form, used in the participle of all verbs. In '*Bydand*,' the motto of the Gordons, the old form still survives.

The Preterite and Past Participle.

A. Weak Verbs—(1) *Regular Forms.*—The O.E. suffixes were *-ode* or *-ede*, *-od* or *-ed*, respectively. This distinction is lost in M.E., which levels all unstressed vowels under *-e*, and, in fact, in O.E. itself the two types were often confused through Analogy.

In Mod. Eng. the final *-e* is, of course, lost, and the

suffix is further shortened by the loss of the vowel before the *-d-* in the majority of verbs—*lov'd*, etc.—in pronunciation. After *-d-* or *-t-*, however, the *e* is retained in pronunciation—*e.g.*, *rott-ed*, *want-ed*, *load-ed*, etc. After voiceless consonants other than *t* the *-d-* is unvoiced, and this fact is sometimes expressed in the spelling, though not at all consequently. The unvoicing takes place in *washed* = 'washt,' *fetched* = 'fetcht,' *kissed* = 'kist,' etc. The Past Participle appears more often written with *t* in the conventional spelling than the Preterite *whipt*, especially when used adjectivally; 'a whipt cur,' and *learnt* are received as proper, while to write *he learnt his lesson*, *he past away*, and still more *he smasht his arm*, would be considered licentious.

(2) *Weak Preterites with Change of Vowel and Consonantal Change.*—The verbs *seek—sought*, *buy—bought*, *teach—taught*, *think—thought*, require a few words of explanation. The change of vowel is the result of the *i*-mutation process, already discussed (pp. 129-131 above); the consonantal changes are mostly, in origin, due to tendencies of change which occurred in the Continental period.

As regards the fact that the *i*-mutation is absent in the Preterite, but occurs in the Present and the Infinitive, this circumstance is due to the absence of the necessary conditions in the Preterite to bring about the change of vowel. Thus we must suppose that the old Infinitives were *sōk-jan*, *bug-jan*; *tāk-jan*, *þunk-jan*, respectively; and the Presents *sōk-ja* (1st person), *bug-ja*, etc., in all of which forms the mutation would be normal. The Preterites, however, must have been *sōhta*, *bohta*, *tāhta*, *þōhta*. O.E. has

two forms for the Preterite of 'teach'—namely, *tāhte* (whence our *taught*) and *tǣhte*, which has been lost. The vowel in the latter form is a mutated form of O.E. *ā*, and it can only be due here to the analogy of the Present and Infinitive.

The fact that O.E. has *sōhte*, etc., in the Preterite is to be explained from a very early change, whereby the combination *-kt-* became *-ht-*; that is, a *back-stop* became a *back-open-consonant*. *Sōhte* (ancestor of *sought*) is from an earlier *sōkta*, and this from still earlier *sōk-da*, the *d* being unvoiced by the preceding voiceless consonant.

O.E. *þōhte* goes back to earlier *þank-ta*, which becomes first *þanhta*, and then loses the nasal consonant (*n*) before *h*, which is a universal habit in the early Germanic languages. But before disappearing, the *n* imparted its nasal quality to the preceding *a*, producing a sound like that in French *sang*, etc. This *nasal vowel* was rounded to *o* in Primitive O.E., and later on the nasalization was lost, being replaced by lengthening of the vowel. As a result of all these processes, which are perfectly regular in Germanic and O.E., we get the O.E. form *þōhte*.

In connexion with this class of verbs, we must also consider the case of *catch—caught*. This is a word of Picard-French origin, and appears in M.E. as *cacchen*, with the usual English verbal suffixes. There are two forms of Preterite in M.E. *cacchede*, which gives the now obsolete English *catched* and *caughte*, whence the form we employ. The interchange of consonants in *cacche—caughte* would be normal if the word had been a genuine English word, but could not possibly take place by ordinary

phonetic change in a word not introduced into the language till the M.E. period. But the change is very common in English verbs in O.E., and, in fact, there is actually an O.E. word meaning 'to catch' which shows this change: *lǣċean—lāhte*, which in M.E. was *lacchen—laughte*. What, then, more natural than that on the model of this old verb a new Preterite *caughte* should be formed for *cacchen?* The two words were sometimes used in the same sentence, and the old naturally influences the new. Thus, the phrase '*he laughte* and *caughte*' (he seized and caught) actually occurs.

(3) *Weak Verbs which have a Shortened Vowel in the Preterite.*—The short vowels in such Preterites as *fed* from *feed*, *hid* from *hide*, are the result of a M.E. shortening before a double consonant, which has been already referred to (*cf.* p. 133 (2) above). The O.E. had Infinitive *fēdan*, Preterite *fēd-de*, Infinitive *hȳdan*, Preterite *hȳd-de*, whence in M.E. *hĭdde*, *fĕdde*. The Infinitives of these words preserved the long vowels, which developed in the normal way.

The verb *slide* was in O.E. *slīdan*, a strong verb, with Preterite *slād*, but has been assimilated to the group we are discussing.

Weep—wept, from O.E. *wēpan—wēp-te* (originally a strong verb), shows the usual M.E. shortening of a long vowel before a combination of consonants (*cf.* p. 133 (2) above).

The unvoicing of the *d* in the suffix of the Preterite *sent* took place already in M.E.

B. Strong Verbs.—Such verbs as *sit—sat—sat; sing—sang—sung; write—wrote—written; see—saw—seen*, owe the interchange of vowels to changes

which took place far back in the past, before the independent existence of English, or even of Germanic. These changes were due purely to phonetic causes, and had originally nothing to do with differences of meaning (see p. 197 below)

There was far more variety in O.E. than at the present day, as in many cases the vowels of the Singular and Plural Preterite were different, as in—

Inf	Pret. Sing	Pret. Pl.	Past. Partic.
giefan, 'give.'	*geaf*	*gēafon.*	*giefen.*
sitten, 'sit.'	*sæt.*	*sǣton*	*seten.*
sēon, 'see.'	*seah.*	*sāwon.*	*sewen.*

In M.E., however, this variety was simplified, and the Singular and Plural were levelled under the same vowel.

The Past Participle always had *the suffix -en in* O.E., which in Mod. Eng. is retained in a few forms—*ridden, written, borne, taken*—but is more often dropped.

Many verbs originally *Strong* are now included among *Weak* verbs—*e.g., climb, help, melt.*

On the other hand, *stick, wear, swear,* which are now *Strong*, were formerly *Weak.*

C. Anomalous Verbs—(1) *Preterite Present Verbs.* —The forms *can, dare, shall, may,* now, as in O.E., used as Presents, are, so far as their *form* goes, old Preterites. This is the reason that they have no *-s* in the 3rd Person Singular. The past tenses of these are derived from the old forms *cūþe*, M.E. *coude* (with change of þ to *d*); *scolde, mihte,* respectively. The O.E. forms were new formations, to take the place of the old Preterites used as Presents. *Dare* is also used as an indefinite verb meaning 'to have

courage,' in which case it is inflected *dares* in 3rd Person Singular, like a regular verb.

The verb *must*, now used both as Present and Preterite, is derived from O.E. *mōste*, which was a new formation, used only as a Preterite. Mod. Eng. has lost the O.E. form *mōt* of this verb, which was used as a Present, although Preterite in form. Had it survived, it must have become '*moot*.'

Ought is, like *must*, the descendant of the O.E. Preterite—*āhte* in this case. The O.E. form *āge* used as the Present of this verb has become Mod. Eng. *owe*, with a different meaning, and with a new Past, *owed*. The meaning of O.E. *āgan* (Infinitive), *āge*, *āhte*, was 'possess.' This, in the Mod. Eng. forms of this verb, has developed the meaning 'to possess an obligation,' to '*owe*,' and, further, the more abstract meaning which we find in *ought*.

Will is an old Subjunctive Preterite in form, used as a Present in O.E., which had *wōlde*, whence our *would*, as a Preterite.

It may be observed that all these Preterite Present verbs, as well as the auxiliary verbs *have*, *do*, *need*, and *be*, are the only verbs in English which can take the negative particle *not* immediately after them.

(2) To *be*, etc. We retain in the Mod. Eng. inflexion of this word three quite distinct roots—*is* and *are* (from same root); *be—been*; *was—were*. The *-m* of the 1st Person Singular is the sole remaining survivor in Mod. Eng. of a class of verbs which took this suffix, originally probably the pronoun of the 1st Person and cognate with *me*. It is to be found also in Latin *sum* and *inqua-m*, and in Greek *εἰμι*, earlier *esmi*.

The interchange of *s—r* in *is—are*, *was—were*, is originally an interchange between voiceless *s* and voiced *z*, and is due to the change which we noted in *wor-se*, compared with the ordinary comparative suffix with *r* (from earlier *z*).

The Preterite *went*, used in the conjugation of *go*, is, of course, from a root of quite different origin from this latter. O.E. had a verb *wendan*, used as a reflexive verb meaning 'go,' with a Preterite *wende*; from this the form *went* is taken. When used as an active verb in Mod. Eng., *to wend* takes the Preterite *wended*.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PLACE OF ENGLISH AMONG OTHER LANGUAGES—CONCLUDING REMARKS

It will readily be believed that the English language does not stand alone among the languages of the earth, a solitary if splendid monument of human genius, entirely unrelated to other forms of speech. To this conclusion we are led, not only from the fact that English did not come into existence in these islands in the prehistoric past, but was introduced here, within the historical period, from the Continent of Europe, a fully formed language, bearing signs of a past history, but also from the close resemblance, in many respects, which English bears to other languages—a resemblance far too strong to be the result of chance.

We have considered at some length, in an earlier chapter, the question of loan-words—words borrowed into English from Latin, Danish, French, Italian, and other languages. We have seen that many of these borrowed words preserve, pretty faithfully, the forms of the languages from which they were borrowed, allowing for the differences made in adapting them to English mouths, and considering

the changes which time works in all words, even in those which were English from the beginning.

But there are other cases of words in English, which are certainly not borrowed from Latin, which yet bear an unmistakable resemblance to Latin words. For instance, while there is no doubt that such words as *fraternity, unity, essence, dentist, aural, domestic,* and many others, are practically Latin pure and simple, it can hardly escape notice that the root words in Latin from which they are borrowed, or with which they are connected, are curiously like corresponding words of genuine English origin. Thus, *frāter—brother; ūnus, ūn-itas—one; essentem, essent-ia —is; dent-em—tooth; auris—ear; dom-us—tame,* are sufficiently close in form to give rise to reflection. If we systematically compare the commonest and most familar words in Latin and in English, such as the names for family relationships, the numerals up to ten, the verb 'to be,' the personal pronouns, we shall find the same resemblance, and if, instead of comparing the modern English words with the Latin, we compare the Old English forms, the connexion between the two languages is very much closer in most cases. Are we to assume, then, that English is derived from Latin, that it is simply a form of Latin which has developed on special lines? Certainly not. This is just the conclusion which we must not draw. The fact is that Latin and English are *cognate* languages—that is, languages which are both sprung from the same original ancestor. This common ancestor is known as Primitive Aryan. It has long ceased to exist independently, and only survives in the various forms of its numerous offspring. But

English, even in its oldest form, is not the direct child of Primitive Aryan.

It must have struck every student of Modern German how very closely this language resembles English—the resemblance is far nearer than that which English bears to Latin. Dutch is even more like English than German is; for instance, German *wasser*, Dutch *water*, English *water*; German *fünf*, Dutch *vijf*, English *five*; German *gut*, Dutch *goed*, English *good*; German *besser*, Dutch *beter*, English *better*; German *weib*, Dutch *wijf*, English *wife*, and so on. Here, again, we must not suppose that English is derived from German, or even from Dutch, but we assume that all three are developed, on more or less different lines, from the same ancestor, which we call Primitive Germanic, and which was a daughter of Primitive Aryan. In the same way Latin is merely one of several closely related dialects formerly spoken in Italy, and all of which we believe to have been developed out of a common ancestor, which we call Primitive Italic. Thus, the immediate starting-point for German, Dutch, and English, on the one hand, is Primitive Germanic; while on the other, Primitive Italic gave rise to Latin, and the other ancient dialects of Italy. These two dialects, then, Germanic and Italic, were sisters, both sprung from the common parent, Primitive Aryan.

Primitive Aryan gave rise to several other dialects, each of which became in turn the mother of a group of languages; that is, each of the dialects into which Primitive Aryan split up, also developed varieties in its turn, which in time became so distinct that their descendants were regarded as separate lan-

guages. The chief of these groups or *Families of languages*, representatives of which still survive, are: The Indian languages, (of which Sanscrit is the chief ancient form, and which has numerous modern representatives. The language of the Gipseys is an Indian dialect, much modified by the languages of the different countries through which the Gipseys have passed); the Hellenic or Greek dialects, Celtic (represented by Irish, Welsh [and Breton], Scotch Gaelic, and Manx), Slavonic (represented by Russian, Polish, Servian, etc.), and Germanic and Italic, as already mentioned.

We can now see, approximately, the relationship of English on the one hand to its near cousins Dutch and German, and on the other to its remoter cousins, many times removed, such as Latin, Greek, Sanscrit, Russian, and Irish. The minute study of these relationships is known as *Comparative Philology*, which is a very difficult and complicated subject. It is not uncommon to find in quite elementary books an attempt to introduce the beginner to some of the details of this study, especially to what purports to be an account of the relationships of English with Latin, Greek, and Sanscrit. This is introduced under the title of what is known as Grimm's Law. This 'Law' states that a certain number of consonantal sounds which existed in Primitive Aryan became such and such other different sounds in Primitive Germanic. Words from Sanscrit, Greek, and Latin, are introduced to illustrate the original Aryan sounds, and are compared with words from English and Gothic, to illustrate the Primitive Germanic sounds. Unfor-

tunately, each of the ancient languages just mentioned has its own peculiar laws of sound change, whereby the original sounds are often changed quite as much as they are in Germanic, so that almost every example requires a special explanation to show how it is that a given Aryan sound has been altered into this or that quite different sound in Latin or Greek. Then, the English examples by no means always illustrate the Primitive Germanic forms as they ought, for here, too, numerous special changes have taken place, which require explanation. Since we hold that this sort of explanation should be left to a later stage of study, and since without it the illustrations from the various languages are apt to mislead, we shall not attempt here to state either Grimm's Law or the equally important Laws of Grassmann and Verner.

It may be possible and profitable, however, to give some indication of what the problems of Comparative Philology are, to give some idea of what is meant by comparing together languages so widely separated as English, Latin, Greek, etc., and also to point out the general and special connexion between such investigations and the questions with which we have tried to deal in this short study of the English Language.

The first point to bear in mind is that the various families of languages which we have enumerated, sprung as they are from a common parent, have yet probably been separate for several thousand years, during which time they have developed on independent and often very different lines. In some cases their original identity is fairly obvious, from

the fact that all, or several, of the speech families have preserved fairly closely the original features of the parent language. Thus, Latin *octo*, Greek ὀκτώ, Old Irish *ocht*, Gothic *ahtau*, 'eight,' have a sufficiently close resemblance for their identity to appear *probable at the first glance.* On the other hand, no one could possibly suspect the equally certain identity of Greek *βαίνω*, Latin *venio*, Gothic *qiman*, O.E. *cuman*, 'come,' without knowing something concerning the characteristic peculiarities of development of Greek, Latin, and Germanic. Now, according to the strict methods of modern Philology, we are not justified in asserting the original identity of a group of words from different languages, unless we are able to account for every sound in each—that is, to show how, and by what process of development, for instance, a certain sound in Primitive Aryan became *β* in Greek, *v* in Latin, *q* (=*kw*) in Gothic, and so on. In the above group of words we should further have to explain the relationship of Greek *-αιν-*, Latin *-en-*, Gothic *-im-*, for the vowels are just as important, and just as regular in their development, as the consonants. To explain these things we should have to show by several examples, that under certain conditions, the same sounds always develop in Hellenic, Italic, and Germanic, in the same way as they are asserted to have done in the above words. This involves a wide survey, and a knowledge of the peculiar habits of development of each of the families mentioned. Again, we have to consider, not merely *the characteristics of each of the speech families* as a whole, but of each of the various dialects or languages into which these have been differentiated.

Thus, before comparing a modern English word, for example, with a Greek word, we have to first trace the word back to its oldest English form—and we have seen above (pp. 132-138) that a good many changes have occurred in English since the O.E. period—and thence to the Primitive Germanic type. Now, the oldest English forms, although they bear often a close resemblance to the oldest forms of the other Germanic languages, are yet often sufficiently distinct and different for it to be evident that each of these languages has changed considerably since the period of original unity in Primitive Germanic. For instance, the word *tooth* in O.E. is *tōþ*, in Gothic *tunþus*, in Old High German *zand*, which shows that whatever the Primitive Germanic form may have been, it has altered on different lines in English, Gothic, and High German (that is, what we generally call 'German'). But when we have reached the Primitive Germanic form of a word, before we can profitably compare it with Latin, we have often to go through a similar process of discovering what was the Primitive Italic form from which the Latin form in question is derived. Latin sometimes preserves this approximately, but equally often the Latin form is proved to have undergone as many changes as the O.E. form. Thus, the forms which Philologists compare together are not the derived forms of individual languages such as Greek and Latin, but the ancestral forms of such types as Primitive Italic and Primitive Hellenic, and Germanic. Even when an English and a Latin word are cited side by side for comparison, it is only as types of the families to which they belong that they are

considered, and although it may not be stated, a Philologist is bound to allow for the individual characteristics of the particular languages, and mentally to carry out the process of reconstruction already referred to.

The habit of merely quoting Sanscrit, Greek, and Latin forms, to represent Primitive Aryan forms, is apt to mislead beginners into the belief that the sounds of the Parent Language are necessarily faithfully preserved in these languages. This is far from being always the case. It sometimes happens that these languages *do* preserve a primitive type almost unchanged, but, on the other hand, many sounds, both consonants and vowels, are subject in each of the above three ancient tongues to a considerable number of changes, both isolative and combinative. Such a statement as 'Greek *β* equals Germanic *p*' is most misleading. *β* in Greek has several origins: sometimes it represents a Primitive Aryan *b*, in which case it corresponds to Germanic *p*; but, on the other hand, it may be a special Greek (or Hellenic) development from an earlier *-gw-*, in which case it corresponds to a *kw* or *k* in Germanic, as in *βαινω* compared with *qiman* (=*kwiman*). Enough has been said to show that smatterings of comparative Philology are not only useless, but that they may be positively harmful.

But without making a study of the innumerable details which go to make up the modern science of Comparative Philology, the beginner may with advantage realize, to some extent, what is their nature, and what are the difficulties involved in showing the precise relationships of a group of

cognate words. The best possible preparation for the advanced study of language is the systematic study of the *Native Language;* the accurate observation of its actually existing forms, as spoken in different parts of the country, among different classes and sections of the community, among the various generations at present living. From the survey of the present, with its exuberant and various life, its multifarious tendencies, here in this direction, there in that, the student passes to a consideration of the earlier phases of the growth of English speech; he observes in each period the rise and passing away of tendencies to change, which leave their traces upon the language of the future; for each successive generation acquires a slightly different form from that with which their elders began, and, in their turn, transmit to those who follow them a language which is no longer precisely that with which they themselves started.

The student of English who looks back through the centuries at the development of the language has to interpret the written symbols of each age, and translate them into the sounds of living speech.

But even by this imperfect medium he discerns a consistent and orderly working of tendency within each dialect, so far as he is able to trace its history. In other words, he soon finds that *regular development* is the order of the day, and learns to distrust the doctrine of 'exceptions.' He perceives that in the same dialect of English, the same sound has always developed in the same way under the same conditions.

We have, in the earlier chapters of this book,

indicated briefly—(1) Changes or tendencies to change which can be observed in operation at the present day; (2) changes which took place in the Early Modern period; (3) changes which occurred in Middle English; (4) changes which came about in the Old English period. All the past changes have left traces upon the present-day language, and a knowledge of all those which have affected our language from the beginning of the English period throws a great deal of light upon the speech of to-day. But there are many things in English which we cannot understand from the study of this language alone, no matter how far we may go back in its history. There are facts the explanation and causes of which lie further back still, some in the Primitive Germanic period, some even more remote, in the dim past of Primitive Aryan.

For instance, we have noted the far-reaching sound change known as *i*-mutation, which we said affected certain vowels in Old English. But in most cases, although the change is plainly observable in Old English itself, the *-i-* which produced it has disappeared already in the oldest form of English, and we have to penetrate into the common Germanic period to discover it.

Again, while English, together with all the other Germanic languages, shows the interchange of vowels which we observe in the strong verbs (pp. 84, 85), and also in other cognate words (p. 82, 2, *β*), these changes are older even than Primitive Germanic. Corresponding changes are found in all the families of Aryan speech, and we must therefore conclude that they were produced in Primitive Aryan, before this

had been split up into Hellenic, Italic, Germanic, etc.

It is clear, then, that the advanced study of English will soon lead us beyond the history of this language alone, into the wider fields of Germanic and Comparative Aryan Philology.

The special study of English is simply the following out, in detail, of the great flood of Aryan speech into one of its innumerable sub-branches.

The multiplication of dialects from what was once, in the remote past, a single uniform language will not surprise the student who has learnt that even in his own speech at the present day slightly different tendencies can be observed among different classes, and in different parts of the country. Imagine communities who, at first, differ from each other in speech as little as do the inhabitants of Yorkshire from those of Lancashire, or as little as the different social divisions of a single large city picture these communities, separated completely from each other, and dispersed in widely distant areas, among peoples who speak completely different languages, and whose way of life is also different, and what will be the result?

The speech of each group thus dispersed will continue to change; the tendencies are different at the start in each group, and therefore the direction of change will be different in each case. But in addition to the initial differences, the variousness of the subsequent development will be accentuated by the external surroundings among which the speakers live—differences of climate, of way of life, of social organization, different neighbours. Imagine

all these circumstances existing in active operation for thousands of years, and the result is the great families of speech into which Primitive Aryan divided. A similar process acting again on each of these families, splits them up in their turn into dialects, and so the process goes on throughout the ages. The importance of the careful observation of the facts of Spoken English, as it exists to-day in its various forms, lies in the fact that the student thus becomes acquainted with those natural tendencies to variation which took place in the past as they exist in the present, and without a knowledge of which we cannot understand the simplest facts of the history of our own or of any other language.

INDEX